

A NEW
Historical Relation
OF THE
KINGDOM
OF
SIAM.

BY

Monsieur *DE LA LOUBERE*,
Envoy Extraordinary from the *FRENCH*
KING, to the **KING** of *SIAM*, in
the years 1687 and 1688.

Wherein a full and curious Account is given of the *Chi-
nese* Way of Arithmetick, and Mathematick Learning.

In Two **T O M E S**
Illustrated with **SCULPTURES**.

Done out of *French*, by *A. P. Gen. R. S. S.*

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St. Pauls Church-yard. **M D C X C I I I.**



A

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A NEW
HISTORICAL RELATION
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The Occasion and Design of this Work.

AT my return from the Voyage I made to Siam, in quality of his Most Christian Majesties Envoy Extraordinary, they whose right it is to command, requir'd me to render them an exact account of the things, which I had seen or learnt in that Country; which will be the whole matter of this work. Others have sufficiently inform'd the Public of the Circumstances of this long Voyage: But as to what concerns the Description of a Country, we cannot have too many Relations, if we would perfectly know it: the last always illustrating the former. But that it may be known from what time I write, I shall declare only that we set Sail from Brest on the First of March, Anno 1687. That we cast Anchor in the Road of Siam the 27th of September, in the same Tear. That we departed thence for our return the 3d of January, 1688. And that we landed at Brest the 27th of July following.

My Design is therefore to treat first of the Country of Siam, its Extent, Fertility, and the qualities of its Soil and Climate: Secondly, I will explain the manners of the Siameses in general, and then their particular Customs according to their various Qualities. Their Government and Religion shall be comprehended in the last part; and I flatter my self that the farther the Reader shall advance in the perusal of this work, the more he will find it worthy of Curiosity; by reason that the Nature and Genius of the Siameses, which I have every where endeavour'd to penetrate into, will be discovered more and more: In fine, not to stay on things, which would not please every one, or which would interrupt my Narrative too much, I will at the end insert several Memoirs which I brought from this Country,

and which I cannot suppress without injuring the Curiosity of the Public. But if notwithstanding this precaution, I do yet enlarge on certain matters beyond the relish of some, I intreat them to consider that general expressions do never afford just Ideas; and that this is to proceed no farther than the superficial Knowledge of things. 'Tis out of this desire of making the Siameses perfectly known, that I give several notices of the other Kingdoms of the Indies and of China: For though rigorously taken, all this may appear foreign to my Subject, yet to me it seems that the Comparifon of the things of Neighbouring Countries with each other, does greatly illustrate them. I hope also that a pardon will be granted me for the Siamese names, which I relate and explain. These remarks will make other relations intelligible as well as mine, which without these Illustrations might sometimes cause a doubt concerning what I assert.

In a word, those with whom I am acquainted do know that I love the Truth; but it is not sufficient to give a sincere relation to make it appear true: 'Tis requisite to add clearness to sincerity, and to be thoroughly inform'd of that wherein we undertake to instruct others. I have therefore considered, interrogated, and penetrated, as far as it was possible; and to render my self more capable of doing it, I carefully read over, before my arrival at Siam, several Ancient and Modern Relations of divers Countreys of the East. So that in my opinion this preparation has supplied the defect of a longer residence, and has made me to remark and understand in the three Months I was at Siam, what I could not perhaps have understood or remark'd in three Years, without the assistance and perusal of those Discourses.

PART I.

Of the Country of Siam.

CHAP. I.

The Geographical Description.

Navigation has sufficiently made known the Sea Coasts of the Kingdom of *Siam*, and many Authors have described them; but they know almost nothing of the Inland Country, because the *Siameses* have not made a Map of their Country, or at least know how to keep it secret. That which I here present is the work of an *European*, who went up the *Menam*, the principal River of the Country, to the Frontiers of the Kingdom; but was not skilful enough to give all the Positions with an entire exactness. Besides he has not seen all; and therefore I thought it necessary to give his Map to Mr. *Cassini*, Director of the Observatory at *Paris*, to correct it by some Memorials which were given me at *Siam*. Nevertheless I know it to be still defective; but yet it fails not to give some notices of this Kingdom which were never heard of, and of being more exact in those we already have.

Its Frontiers extend Northward to the 22^d. Degree, or thereabouts; and the Road which terminates the Gulph of *Siam*, being almost at the Latitude of 13 degrees and a half, it follows, that this whole extent, of which we hardly have any knowledge, runs about 170 Leagues in a direct Line, reckoning 20 Leagues to a degree of Latitude, after the manner of our Seamen.

The *Siameses* do say that the City of *Chiamai* is fifteen days journey more to the North, than the Frontiers of their Kingdom, that is to say at most, between sixty and seventy Leagues; for they are Journeys by water, and against the Stream. 'Tis about thirty years since their King, as they report, took this City, and abandon'd it, after having carried away all the People; and it has been since re-peopled by the King of *Ava*, to whom *Pegu* does at present render Obedience. But the *Siameses* which were at that expedition, do not know that famous Lake, from whence our Geographers make the River *Menam* arise, and to which, according to them, this City gives its Names: which makes me to think either that it is more distant than our Geographers have conceived, or that there is no such Lake. It may also happen that this City adjoining to several Kingdoms, and being more subject than another to be ruined by War, has not always been rebuilt in the same place: And this is not difficult to imagine of the Cities which are built only with wood, as all in these Countreys are, and which in their destruction leave not any Ruines nor Foundations. However it may be doubted, whether the *Menam* springs from a Lake, by reason it is so small at its entrance into the Kingdom of *Siam*, that for about fifty Leagues, it carries only little Boats capable of holding no more than four or five Persons at most.

The Kingdom of *Siam* is bounded from the East to the North by high Mountains, which separate it from the Kingdom of *Laos*, and on the North and West by others, which divide it from the Kingdoms of *Pegu* and *Ava*. This double Chain of Mountains (inhabited by a few, savage, and poor, but yet free People, whose Life is innocent) leaves between them a great Valley, containing in some places between fourscore and an hundred Leagues in breadth, and is watered

How much this Kingdom is unknown.

Its Frontiers Northward.

The City of Chiamai and its Lake.

The Country of Siam is only a Valley.

tered from the City of *Chiamai* to the Sea, that is to say from the North to the South, with an excellent River which the *Siamese* call *Me-nam*, or *Mother-water*, to signify, a great water, which being encreased by the Brooks and Rivers it receives on every side, from the Mountains I have mentioned, discharges it self at last into the Gulph of *Siam* by three mouths, the most navigable of which is that toward the East.

Cities seated
on the River.

On this River, and about seven Miles from the Sea, is seated the City of *Bancok*: and I shall transiently declare, that the *Siamese* have very few habitations on their Coasts, which are not far distant from thence; but are almost all seated on Rivers navigable enough to afford them the Commerce of the Sea. As to the names of most of these places, which for this reason may be called Maritime, they are disguised by Foreigners. Thus the City of *Bancok* is called *Fon* in *Siamese*, it not being known from whence the name of *Bancok* is derived, altho there be several *Siamese* Names, that begin with the word *Ban*, which signifies a Village.

The Gardens
of *Bancok*.

The Gardens which are in the Territory of *Bancok*, for the space of four Leagues, in ascending towards the City of *Siam* to a place named *Talacoan*, do supply this City with the Nourishment which the Natives of the Country love best, I mean a great quantity of Fruit.

Other Cities
on the *Menam*.

The other principal places which the *Menam* waters, are, *Me-Tac* the first City of the Kingdom to the North North-West, and then successively *Tian-Tong*, *Campeng-pet* or *Campeng* simple, which some do pronounce *Campingue*, *Laconcevan*, *Tchainat*, *Siam*, *Talacoan*, *Talagueou*, and *Bancok*. Between the two Cities of *Tchainat* and *Siam*, and at a distance, which the Meanders of the River do render almost equal from each other, the River leaves the City of *Louvo* a little to the East, at the 14 d. 42 m. 32 s. of Latitude, according to the observations which the Jesuites have published. The King of *Siam* does there spend the greatest part of the year, the more commodiously to enjoy the diversion of Hunting: but *Louvo* would not be habitable, were it not for a channel cut from the River to water it. The City of *Me-Tac* renders obedience to an Hereditary Lord, who, they say, is a Vassal to the King of *Siam*, whom some call *Paga-Tac*, or Prince of *Tac*. *Tian-Tong* is ruin'd, doubtless by the Ancient Wars of *Pegu*. *Campeng* is known by the Mines of excellent Steel.

Another River
likewise called
Menam.

At the City of *Laconcevan* the *Menam* receives another considerable River which comes also from the North, and is likewise called *Menam*, a name common to all great Rivers. Our Geographers make it to spring from the Lake of *Chiamai*: but it is certain that it hath its source in the Mountains, which lye not so much to the North as this City. It runs first to *Menang-fang*, then to *Pitchai*, *Pisfanoulou*, and *Pitchi*, and at last to *Laconcevan*, where it mixes, as I have said with the other River.

Pisfanoulou, which the *Portuguese* do corruptly call *Porcelouc* has formerly had hereditary Lords, like the City of *Me-Tac*: and Justice is at present executed in the Palace of the Ancient Princes. 'Tis a City of great commerce, fortified with fourteen Bastions, and is at 19 degrees and some minutes Latitude.

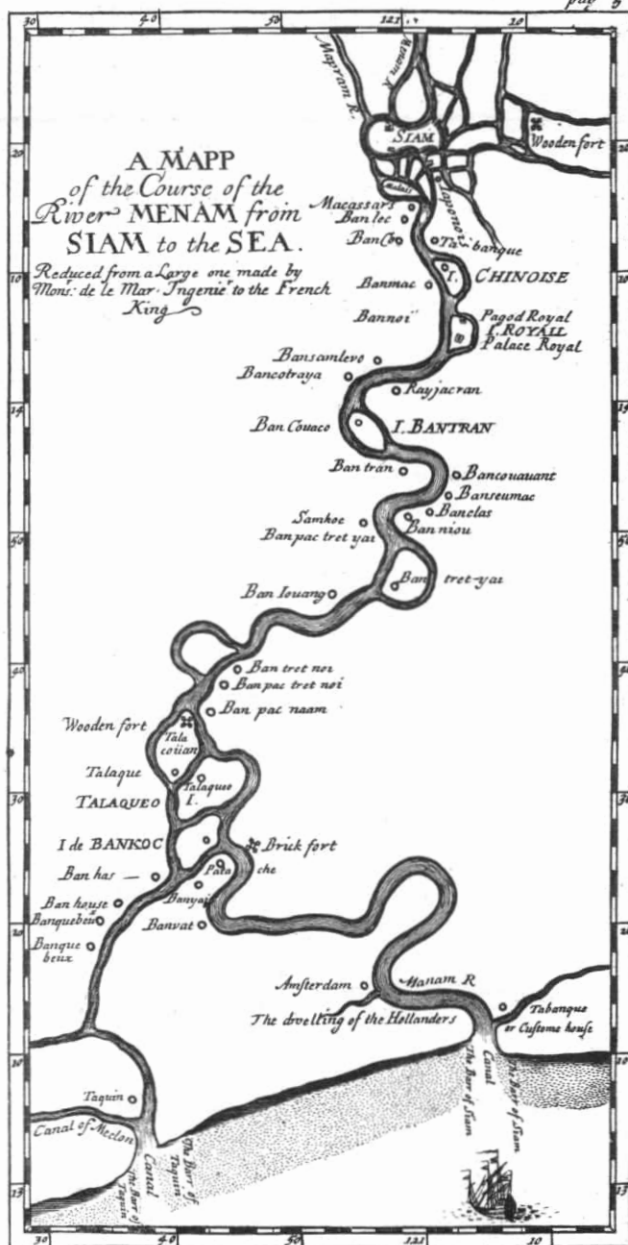
Laconcevan stands about the mid-way from *Pisfanoulou* or *Porcelouc* to *Siam*, a distance computed to be Twenty five days Journey, for those that go up the River in a Boat or *Balon*; but this voyage may be performed in twelve days when they have a great many Rowers, and they ascend the River with speed.

Cities of
Wood.

These Cities, like all the rest in the Kingdom of *Siam*, are only a great number of Cabbins frequently environ'd with an enclosure of Wood, and sometimes with a Brick, or Stone Wall, but very rarely of Stone. Nevertheless as the Eastern people have ever had as much magnificence and pride in the figures of their Language, as simplicity and poverty in whatever appertains to Life, the names of these Cities do signify great things; *Tian-Tong*, for instance, signifies True Gold; *Campeng-pet*, Walls of Diamond; and 'tis said that its Walls are of Stone: and *Laconcevan* signifies the Mountain of Heaven.

The supersti-
tion of the Si-
amites at *Men-
ang-fang*.

But as for what concerns *Menang-fang*, the word *Fang* being the name of a Tree famous for dying, and which the *Portuguese* have called *Sapan*; some interpret



terpret it the City of the Wood of Sapan. And because that there is kept a Tooth, which is pretended to be a Relick of *Sammona-Codom*, to whose Memory the *Siameses* do erect all their Temples; there are some who call not this City *Menang-fang*, but *Menang-fan*, or the City of the Tooth. The superstition of these people continually draws thither a great number of Pilgrims, not *Siameses* only, but from *Pegu*, and *Laos*.

Such another Superstition prevails at a place named *Pra-bat*, about five or six leagues to the East-North-East of the City of *Louvo*; the superstition is this; In the *Balie* Language, which is the learned tongue of the *Siameses*, or the Tongue of their Religion, *Bat* signifies a Foot, and the word *Pra*, of which it is not possible exactly to render the signification, signifies in the same tongue whatever may be conceived worthy of veneration and respect. The *Siameses* do give this title to the Sun and Moon, but they do also give it to *Sammona-Codom*, to their Kings, and some considerable Officers.

The *Prabat* is therefore the print of a mans foot, cut by an ill Graver upon a Rock; but this impression containing about 13 or 14 inches in depth, is five or six times as long as a man's Foot, and proportionably as broad. The *Siameses* adore it, and are persuaded that the Elephants, especially the white ones, the Rhinoceros, and all the other Beasts of their Woods, do likewise go to worship it when no person is there; And the King of *Siam* himself goes to adore it once a year with a great deal of Pomp and Ceremony. It is covered with a Plate of Gold, and inclosed in a Chappel which is there built. They report that this Rock which is now very flat and like a new mown Field, was formerly a very high Mountain, which shrunk and waxed level on a sudden under the Foot of *Sammona-Codom*, in memory of whom they believe that the Impression of the Foot does there remain. Nevertheless it is certain by the Testimony of ancient men, that the Antiquity of this Tradition exceeds not 90 years. A *Talapoin*, or Religious *Siamese*, of that time, having doubtless made this Impression himself, or procured it to be made, and then feigned to have miraculously discovered it, and without any other appearance of Truth, gave Reputation and Credit to this Fable of the level'd Mountain.

Now in all this the *Siameses* are only gross Imitators. In the Histories of *India* it is related, with what respect a King of the Island of *Ceylon* kept an Apes Tooth, which the *Indians* averred to be a Relique, and with what Sums he endeavoured to purchase and ransom it from *Constantine of Briganium*, then Viceroy of the *Indies*, who had found it amongst the Spoils taken from the *Indians*: But *Constantine* chose rather to burn it, and afterwards throw the Ashes into a River. 'Tis known likewise that in the same Island of *Ceylon*, which the *Indians* do call *Lanca*, and on a real Mountain which is not levelled, there is a pretended print of a Man's foot, which has for a long time been in great Veneration there. It doubtless represents the Left foot: For the *Siameses* report that *Sammona-Codom* set his right foot on their *Prabat*, and his left on *Lanca*; altho the whole Gulph of *Bengala* runs between them.

The *Portuguese* have called the Print at *Ceylon* *Adam's Foot*, and believe that *Ceylon* was the Terrestrial Paradise, from the Faith of the *Indians* at *Ceylon*, who declare that the Impression which they reverence, is the Print of the first Man: Every one of these Heathenish Nations vigorously asserting that the first Man inhabited their Country. Thus the *Chinese* do call the first man *Puonchò*, and believe that he inhabited *China*. I say nothing of some other Impressions of this nature, which are rever'd in several places of the *Indies*; nor of the pretended print of *Hercules* foot, mentioned by *Herodotus*. I return to my subject.

Another Superstition at *Prabat*.

What it is.

The Original of this Superstition.

What the *Adam's* foot of *Ceylon* is.

Lib. 4. c. 82.

C H A P. II.

A Continuation of the Geographical Description of the Kingdom of Siam, with an Account of its Metropolis.

Other Cities
of the King-
dom of Siam.

A Country
intersected
with Chan-
nels.
The City of
Siam descri-
bed.

ON the Frontiers of Pegu is seated the City of Cambory, and on the borders of Laos the Town of Corazema, which some do call *Carissima*, both very Famous. And in the Lands which lie between the Rivers above the City of *Laconcevan*, and on the Channels which have a Communication from one River to the other, there are two other considerable Cities, *Socotai*, almost in the same Latitude with *Pitchit*, and *Sanguelone* more to the North.

The Country being so hot that it is inhabitable only near Rivers, the *Siameses* have cut a great many Channels; and without having better Memoirs or Notes, tis impossible to reckon up all the Cities seated thereon.

Tis by the means of these Channels, called by the *Siameses* *Cloem*, that the City of Siam is not only become an Island, but is placed in the middle of several Islands, which renders the situation thereof very singular. The Isle wherein it is situated, is at present all inclosed within its walls, which certainly was not in the time of *Ferdinand Mendez Pinto*; if notwithstanding the continual mistakes of this Author, who seems to rely too much on his memory, we may believe what he says, that the Elephants of the King of Pegu, who then besieged the City of Siam, did so nearly approach the Walls, as with their Trunks to beat down the Palisado's which the *Siameses* had there placed to cover themselves.

Its Latitude, according to Father *Thomas* the Jesuit, is 14 d. 20 m. 40 S. and its Longitude 120 d. 30 m. It has almost the figure of a Purle, the mouth of which is to the East, and the bottom to the West. The River meets it at the North by several Channels, which run into that which environs it; and leaves it on the South, by separating itself again into several streams. The King's Palace stands to the North on the Canal which embraces the City; and by turning to the East, there is a Causey, by which alone, as by an *Isthmus*, People may go out of the City without crossing the water.

The City is spacious, considering the Circuit of its Walls, which, as I have said, incloses the whole Isle; but scarce the sixth part thereof is inhabited, and that to the South-East only. The rest lies desert, where the Temples only stand. Tis true that the Suburbs, which are possessed by strangers, do considerably increase the number of the People. The streets thereof are large and strait, and in some places planted with Trees, and paved with Bricks laid edgewise. The Houses are low, and built with Wood; at least those belonging to the Natives, who, for these Reasons, are exposed to all the Inconveniences of the excessive heat. Most of the streets are watered with strait Canals, which have made Siam to be compar'd to *Venice*, and on which are a great many small Bridges of Hurdles, and some of Brick very high and ugly.

Its Names.

The Name of Siam is unknown to the *Siamese*. Tis one of those words which the *Portugueses* of the *Indies* do use, and of which it is very difficult to discover the Original. They use it as the Name of the Nation, and not of the Kingdom: And the Names of Pegu, Lao, Mogul, and most of the Names which we give to the *Indian* Kingdoms, are likewise National Names; so that to speak rightly, we must say, the King of the *Peguins*, *Laos*, *Moguls*, *Siams*, as our Ancestors said, the King of the *François*. In a word, those that understand *Portuguese*, do well know that according to their Orthography, *Siam* and *Siam* are the same thing; and that by the Similitude of our Language to theirs, we ought to say the *Siams*, and not the *Siams*: so when they write in Latin, they call them

The true
Name of the
Siameses signifies
Franks.

Siameses. The *Siameses* give to themselves the Name of *Tai*, or *Free*, as the word now signifies in their Language: And thus they flatter themselves with bearing the Name

Name of *Frances*, which our Ancestors assum'd when they resolv'd to deliver the *Gauls* from the *Roman* Power. And those that understand the Language of *Pegu*, affirm that *Siam* in that Tongue signifies *Free*. 'Tis from thence perhaps that the *Portugues* have derived this word, having probably known the *Siamese* by the *Peguins*. Nevertheless *Navarete* in his *Historical Treatise of the Kingdom of China*, chap. 1. art. 5. relates that the Name of *Siam*, which he writes *Sian*, comes from these two words *Sien lo*, without adding their signification, or of what Language they are; altho' it may be presumed he gives them for *Chinesse*, *Muang Tai* is therefore the *Siamese* Name of the Kingdom of *Siam* (for *Muang* signifies Kingdom) and this word wrote simply *Muantay*, is found in *Vincent le Blanc*, and in several Geographical Maps, as the Name of a Kingdom adjoining to *Pegu*: But *Vincent le Blanc* apprehended not that this was the Kingdom of *Siam*, not imagining perhaps that *Siam* and *Tai* were two different Names of the same People.

As for the City of *Siam*, the *Siamese* do call it *Si-yo-thi-ya*, the *o* of the Syllable *yo* being closer than our Dipthong *au*. Sometimes also they call it *Crung-the-papra maba' nacon*: But most of these words are difficult to understand, because they are taken from this *Bah* Language, which I have already declared to be the learned Language of the *Siamese*, and which they themselves do not always perfectly understand. I have already remark'd what I know concerning the word *Pra*, that of *Maba* signifies *Great*. Thus in speaking of their King, they stile him *Pra Maha Crassat*; and the word *Crassat*, according to their report signifies *living*; and because the *Portugues* have thought that *Pra* signifies *God*, they imagin that the *Siamese* called their King, *The great living God*. From *Si-yo-thi-ya*, the *Siamese* Name of the City of *Siam*, Foreigners have made *Judia*, and *Odiau*, by which it appears that *Vincent le Blanc*, and some other Authors, do very ill distinguish *Odiau* from *Siam*.

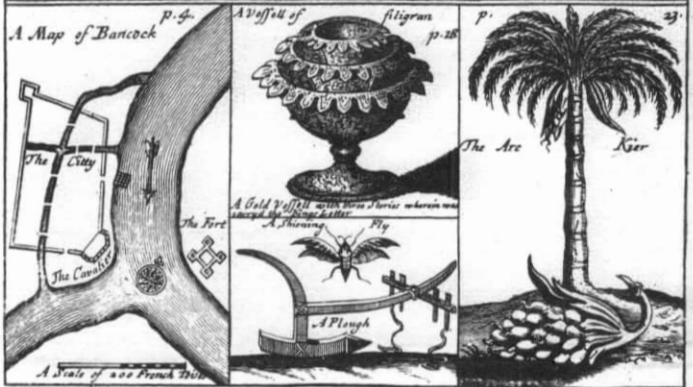
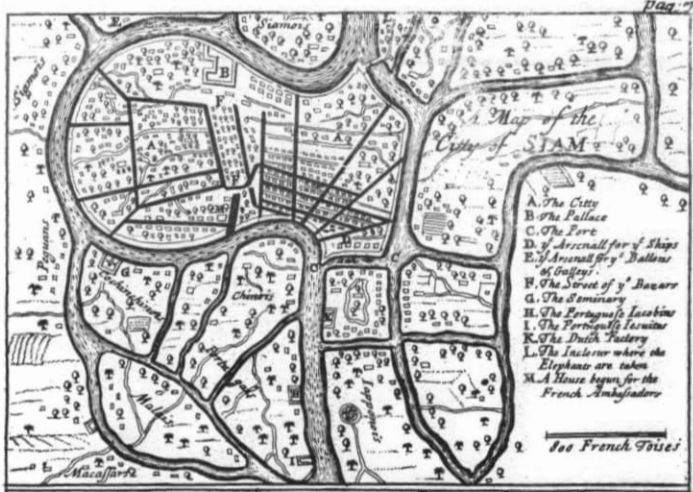
In a word, the *Siamese*, of whom I treat, do call themselves *Tai Noe*, little *Si-ams*. There are others, as I was informed, altogether savage, which are called *Tai yai*, great *Siams*, and which do live in the Northern Mountains. In several Relations of these Countries, I find a Kingdom of *Siammun*, or *Siam*: but all do not agree that the People thereof are savage.

In fine, the Mountains which lie on the common Frontiers of *Ava*, *Pegu* and *Other Mountains*, gradually decreasing as they extend to the South, do form the *Peninsula of Siam*, gradually decreasing as they extend to the South, do form the *Peninsula of Siam*, *India extra Gangem*, which terminating at the City of *Sincapura*, separates the Gulphs of *Siam* and *Bengala*, and which with the Island of *Samatra* forms the famous Strait of *Malaca*, or *Sincapura*. Several Rivers do fall from every part of these Mountains into the Gulphs of *Siam* and *Bengala*, and render these Coasts habitable. The other Mountains which rise between the Kingdom of *Siam* and *Laos*, and extend themselves also towards the South, do run gradually decreasing, till they terminate at the Cape of *Camboja*, the most Eastern of all those in the Continent of *Asia* toward the South. 'Tis about the Latitude of this Cape, that the Gulph of *Siam* begins; and the Kingdom of this Name extends a great way towards the South in form of an Horseshoe on either side of the Gulph, viz. along the Eastern Coast to the River *Chantebon*, where the Kingdom of *Camboja* begins; and opposite thereunto, viz. in the *Peninsula extra Gangem*, which lies on the West of the Gulph of *Siam*, it extends to *Queda* and *Patapa*, the Territories of the *Malayans*, of which *Malaca* was formerly the Metropolis.

After this manner it runs about 200 Leagues on the side toward the Gulph of *Siam*, and 180, or thereabouts, on the Gulph of *Bengala*, an advantageous situation *Siam*, which opens unto the Natives of the Countrey the Navigation on all these vast Eastern Seas. Add that as Nature has refus'd all manner of Ports and Roads to the Coast of *Coromandel*, which forms the Gulph of *Bengala* to the West, it has therewith enrich'd that of *Siam* which is opposite to it, and which is on the East of the same Gulph.

A great number of Isles do cover it, and render it almost everywhere a safe Harbor for Ships; besides, that most of these Isles have very excellent Ports, and abundance of fresh water and wood, an invitation for new Colonies. The

King



King of *Siam* affects to be called Lord thereof, altho' his People, who are very thin in the firm Land, have never inhabited them; and he has not strength enough at Sea to prohibit or hinder the entrance thereof to strangers.

The City of
Merguy.

The City of *Merguy* lies on the North-West Point of a great and populous Island, which at the extremity of its course forms a very excellent River, which the *Europeans* have called *Tenasserim*, from the Name of a City seated on its Banks about 15 Leagues from the Sea. This River comes from the North, and after having passed through the Kingdoms of *Ava* and *Pegu*, and enter'd into the Lands under the King of *Siam's* Jurisdiction, it discharges itself by three Channels into the Gulph of *Bengal*, and forms the Island I have mention'd. The Ports of *Merguy*, which some report to be the best in all *India*, is between this Isle and another that is inhabited, and lies opposite, and to the West of this, wherein *Merguy* is situated.

C H A P. III.

Concerning the History and Origine of the Siameses.

The Siameses
little curious
of their Hi-
story.

THE *Siamese* History is full of Fables. The Books thereof are very scarce, by reason the *Siameses* have not the use of Printing; for upon other Accounts I doubt of the report, that they affect to conceal their History, seeing that the *Chinese*, whom in many things they imitate, are not so jealous of theirs. However that matter is, notwithstanding this pretended Jealousy of the *Siameses*, they who have attain'd to read any thing of the History of *Siam*, assert that it ascends not very high with any character of truth.

The Epochs of
the Siameses.

Behold a very dry and insipid Chronological Abridgment which the *Siameses* have given thereof: But before we proceed, it is necessary to tell you, that the current year 1689, beginning it in the month of *December* 1688, is the 2233 of their *Asra*, from which they date the Epochs, or beginning (as they say) from *Sommona-Codom's* death. But I am persuaded that this Epochs has quite another foundation, which I shall afterwards explain.

Their Kings.

Their first King was named *Pra Poat konne sourittep penmaratui sonanne bopitra*: The chief place where he kept his Court was called *Tchui pappe Mahanacou*, the situation of which I ignore; and he began to reign *An*. 1300. computing after their Epochs. Ten other Kings succeeded him, the last of which, named *Ipoja sanne Thora Thefma Teperat*, remov'd his Royal Seat to the City of *Tafou Nacora Louang*, which he had built, the situation of which is also unknown to me: The twelfth King after him, whose Name was *Pra Poa Noome Thele seri*, oblig'd all his People in 1731, to follow him to *Locintai*, a City seated on a River, which descends from the Mountains of *Laos*, and runs into the *Menam* a little above *Porfalone*, from which *Locontai* is between 40 and 50 Leagues distant. But this Prince resided not always at *Locontai*; for he came and built, and inhabited the City of *Pipeli* on a River, the mouth of which is about two Leagues to the West of the most occidental mouth of *Menam*. Four other Kings succeeded him, of which *Rhamatiloni*, the last of the four, began to build the City of *Siam* in 1894, and there established his Court. By which it appears, that they allow to the City of *Siam* the Antiquity of 338 years. The King Regent is the twenty fifth from *Rhamatiloni*, and this year 1689, is the 56th or 57th year of his age. Thus do they reckon 52 Kings in the space of 924 years, but not all of the same Blood.

The Race of
the present
King.

Mr. *Gervaise* in his *Natural and Political History of the Kingdom of Siam*, gives us the History of the now Regent King's Father; and *Van Vliet* gives it us much more circumstanced, in his *Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam*, printed at the end of Sir *Thomas Herbert's Travels into Persia*. I refer the Reader thither to see an Example of the Revolutions, which are common at *Siam*; for this King

King who was not of the Royal Race, tho' *Viet* asserts the contrary, took away the Scepter and Life of his Natural Lords, and put to death all the Princes of their Blood except two, which were alive when *Viet* writ, but of whom I could not learn any News. Without all doubt this Usurper put them to death like the rest. And in truth, *John Struy*, in the *First Tome of his Voyages*, asserts that this was the Fate of the last of these two Princes, who was alive in the year 1650, and was then 20 years old; the Tyrant put him to death that very year, with one of his Sisters, upon an Accusation notoriously false: But a remarkable Circumstance of the History of his Usurpation, was, that entering by force of Arms into the Palace, he forced the King to quit it, and flee into a Temple for refuge; and having drag'd this unfortunate Prince out of this Temple, and carry'd him back a Prisoner to the Palace, he caus'd him to be declared unworthy of the Crown and Government, for having deserted the Palace. To this Usurper who died in 1657, after a Reign of 30 years, succeeded his Brother; because his Son could not, or durst not then to dispute the Crown with him. On the contrary, to secure his Life, he sought a Sanctuary in a Cloyster, and cloath'd himself with the inviolable Habit of a *Talapoia*. But he afterwards so politickly took his measures, that he dispossest his Uncle, who flying from the Palace on his Elephant, was slain by a *Portuguese* with a Musket.

Ferdinand Mendez Pinto relates that the King of *Siam*, who reigned in 1547, Another Ex-
and to whom he gives great Praises, was poyson'd by the Queen his Wife at his ample of the
return from a military Expedition. This Prince's deliberated thus to prevent the Revolutions
vengeance of her Husband, by reason that during his absence she had maintain'd of *Siam*.
an amorous Commerce, by which she prov'd with Child. And this Author adds, that she soon after destroy'd the King her own Son in the same manner, and had the Credit to get the Crown set upon her Lover's Head the 11th of
November 1548. But in January 1549, they were both assassinated in a Temple,
and a Bastard Prince, the Brother and Uncle of the two last Kings, was taken
out of a Cloyster to be advanced on the Throne. The Crowns of *Asia* are
always infatigable, and those of *India*, *China*, and *Japan*, much more than the
others.

As for what concerns the Origine of the *Siameses*, it would be difficult to judge whether they are only a single People, directly descended from the first the Origine
Men that inhabited the Countrey of *Siam*, or whether in process of time some of the *Siamese*
other Nation has not also settled there, notwithstanding the first Inhabi-
tants.

The principal Reason of this Doubt proceeds from the *Siameses* understand- Two Languages
ing two Languages, viz. the Vulgar, which is a simple Tongue, consisting almost ges at *Siam*.
wholly of Monosyllables, without Conjugation or Declension; and another Language which I have already spoken of, which to them is a dead Tongue, known only by the Learned, which is called the *Balia* Tongue, and which is enriched with the inflexions of words, like the Languages we have in *Europe*. The terms of Religion and Justice, the names of Offices, and all the Ornaments of the Vulgar Tongue are borrow'd from the *Balia*. In this Language they compose their best Songs; so that it seems at least that some Foreign Colony had formerly inhabited the Countrey of *Siam*, and had carry'd thither a second Language. But this is a Dispute that might be rais'd concerning all the Countreys of *India*; for, like *Siam*, they all have two Languages, one of which is still remaining only in their Books.

The *Siameses* assert that their Laws are Foreign, and came to them from the Countrey of *Laos*, which has, perhaps, no other Foundation than the Conformity of the Laws of *Laos* with those of *Siam*, even as there is a Conformity between the Religions of these two Nations and with that of the *Pagans*. Now this does not strictly prove that any of these three Kingdoms hath given its Laws and its Religion to the rest, seeing that it may happen that all the three may have deriv'd their Religion and their Laws from another common Source. However it be, as the Tradition is at *Siam*, that their Laws and Kings came from *Laos*, the same Tradition runs at *Laos*; that their Kings and most of their Laws came from *Siam*.

What the *Siamese* report concerning the Origine of their Laws and Religions

Of the *Balie* Language.

The *Siameses* speak not of any Country where the *Balie* Language, which is that of their Laws and their Religion, is now in use. They suspect indeed, according to the report of some amongst them, which have been at the Coast of *Cormandel*, that the *Balie* Language has some similitude with some one of the Dialects of that Country: but they agree at the same time that the Letters of the *Balie* Language are known only amongst them. The secular Missionaries established at *Siam*, are of opinion that this Language is not entirely extinct: by reason they saw in their Hospital a man come from about the Cape of *Comorin*, who interspers'd several *Balie* words in his discourse, affirming that they were used in his Country, and that he had never studied, and knew only his Mother Tongue. They moreover averr for truth, that the Religion of the *Siameses* came from those Quarters, because that they have read in a *Balie* Book, that *Semmona-Codom* whom the *Siameses* adore, was the Son of a King of the Island of *Ceylon*.

The *Siameses* resemble their Neighbours.

But setting aside all these uncertainties, the vulgar Language of the *Siameses*, like in its Simplicity to those of *China*, *Tonquin*, *Cochinchina*, and the other States of the East, sufficiently evinces that those who speak it, are near of the same Genius with their Neighbours. Add hereunto their Indian Figure, the colour of their Complexion mixt with red and brown, (which corresponds neither to the North of *Asia*, *Europe*, nor *Africa*.) Add likewise their short Nose, rounded at the end, as their Neighbours generally have it; the upper Bone of their Cheeks high and raised, their Eyes slit a little upwards, their Ears larger than ours, in a word all the Lineaments of the Indian and Chinese Physionomy; their Countenance naturally squeez'd and bent like that of Apes, and a great many other things which they have in common with these Animals, as well as a marvellous passion for Children. For nothing is equal to the Tenderness which the great Apes express'd to their Cubs, except the Love which the *Siameses* have for all Children, whether for their own, or those of another.

The King of *Siam* loves Children till 7 or 8 years old.

The King of *Siam* himself is incompas'd with them, and delights to educate them till seven or eight years old: after which, as they lose the childish Air, they do also lose his Favour. One alone, say some, was there kept till between twenty and thirty years of Age, and is still his favourite. Some do call him his adopted Son, others suspect him to be his Bastard; He is at least Foster Brother to his Lawful Daughter.

That the *Siameses* came not from far to inhabit their Country.

But if you consider the extremely Low Lands of *Siam*, that they seem to escape the Sea as it were by miracle, and that they lie annually under-reit water for several Months, the almost infinite number of very incommodious Insects which they engender, and the excessive Heat of the Climate under which they are seated; it is difficult to comprehend that others could resolve to inhabit them, excepting such as came thither by little and little from places adjacent: And it may be thought that they have been inhabited not many Ages, if a Judgment may be made thereof by the few Woods that are stubbed as yet. Moreover it would be necessary to travel more to the North of *Siam*, to find out the warlike People which could yield those innumerable swarms of men, which departed out of their own Country to go and possess others. And how is it possible that they should not be stopp'd on the Road, among some of those soft and effeminate People, which lie between the Country of the *Scythians*, and the Woods and impassable Rivers of the *Siameses*? 'Tis not therefore probable that the Lesser *Siameses*, which we have spoken of, are descended from the Greater, and that the Greater withdrew into the Mountains which they inhabit, to free themselves from the Tyranny of the neighbouring Princes, under which they were born.

Strangers that have come to *Siam*.

Nevertheless it is certain that the *Siamese* blood is very much mixed with foreign. Not to reckon the *Peguins*, and the Inhabitants of *Laos*, which are at *Siam*, and whom I consider almost as the same Nation with the *Siameses*; 'tis not to be doubted that there formerly fled to *Siam* a great number of Strangers from different Countries, upon the account of a free Liberty of Trade, and by reason of the Wars of the true *India*, *China*, *Japan*, *Tonquin*, *Cochinchina*, and other States in the South part of *Asia*. They report likewise that in the City of

Siam,

Siam, there are forty different Nations : but inasmuch as *Vincent le Blanc* speaks in these very terms concerning the City of *Martaban*, this affected Number of Forty Nations appears unto me an *Indian* Vanity. The entire annihilation of the Commerce of *Siam*, having in these last years forc'd most of the Foreigners, that fled thither, to seek out new Retreats, three or four *Canoniens* which are of *Bengal*, do now compose a Nation ; three *Cochinchinese* Families do make another ; the *Moors* alone which ought to be reckon'd only for one, do make more than ten, as well for that they came to *Siam* from different Nations, as for their being of various conditions, as Merchants, Soldiers, and Labourers. (I call *Moors* after the *Spanish* manner, not the *Negros*, but those *Mahumetans* of *Arabian* Extraction, which our Ancestors have called *Sarracens*, and whose race is spread almost through our whole Hemisphere.) And notwithstanding all this, when the Ambassadors of the Foreigners, which at *Siam* are called the Forty Nations, came to salute the King's Envoys, there were reckon'd no more than one and twenty Nations, computing as the *Siameses* would have us.

They inhabit different quarters in the City or Suburbs of *Siam* ; and yet this City is very little inhabited in respect to its Bigness, and the Country much less in Proportion. It must be imagined that they desire not a greater People, for they count them every year, and do well know, what no person ignores, that the only secret to encrease them, would be to ease them in the Taxes and Impositions. The *Siameses* do therefore keep an exact account of the Men, Women, and Children ; and in this vast extent of Land, according to their own Confession, they reckon'd up the last time but Nineteen Hundred Thousand Souls. From which I question not that some retrenchment is to be made for Vanity and Lyes, Characters essential to the Eastern people ; but on the other hand, thereunto must be added the Fugitives, which do seek a Sanctuary in the Woods against the Government.

The people of the Kingdom of *Siam* not very numerous.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Productions of *Siam*, and first of the Woods or Trees.

THE Country of *Siam* lies almost wholly incultivated and cover'd with Woods. One of their most eminent Trees is a kind of Reed, called in *Indian*, *Mambou*, in *Portuguese*, *Bambou*, in *Siamese*, *Mai pai*. The *Indians* apply it to an infinite number of uses. *Ellian lib. 4. cap. 34.* mentions it as their most ancient nourishment. At present they use it little ; and that only in some of their dishes, when it is tender ; and to preserve it, they Pickle it up in Vinegar, as we do Cucumbers and Samphire. This Tree resembles the Poplar, it is straight and tall, and the Leaves thereof few, pale, and longish. It is hollow, and grows in shoots like our Reeds, and its shoots are separated from one another by knots : but it has Branches and Thorns, which our Reeds have not. It grows very close, and the same Roots do shoot forth several stems, so that nothing is thicker or more difficult to pass than a Forest of *Bambou* ; and so much the more because the wood thereof is hard and difficult to cut, although it be easy to cleave. The *Siameses* do set it on fire by Friction, which is a token of its hardness. They have two pieces of *Bambou* cleav'd, which are like two pieces of Lath, in the edge of the one they do make a notch, and do forcibly rub in this hole with the edge of the other, as with a Saw ; and some dry leaves, or other combustible matter, which is put in the notch, fails not to catch fire without firing the *Bambou*. There is no Reed but has naturally somewhat either more or less of a Sugary juice. That of the *Bambou* is famous in some places of *India*, as an excellent Remedy for several Maladies. It escap'd my curiosity to ask whether the Sugar of the *Bambou* of *Siam* is as much sought after upon this account, as that of the *Bambou* of *Malaca*, which is not far distant.

The *Bambou*.

The

The Arvore de Raiz. The *Siameses* report that they likewise have that Tree, which the *Portuguese* have called *Arvore de Raiz*, and they *Co-pai*, but that they have no plenty: and they add that its wood hath this property (doubtless by its smell) that when any person hath a little of it near him in his Bed, it drives away the Gnats. 'Tis from the Branches of this Tree, so frequently described in the Relations of *India*, that several Fibers do hang down to the ground, which there take root, and become as so many new Trunks: so that by little and little this Tree gains a considerable plot of ground, on which it forms a kind of Labyrinth by its stems, which continually multiply, and which adhere to one another by the branches, from which these stems are fall'n. We have seen the *Siameses* seek out other Remedies against the Gnats than that of this wood: and this persuades me either that it is very rare, or that this virtue which is attributed thereunto, is not well attested.

The Cotton Tree and Capoequier. But the *Siameses* have other Trees more useful, and in great plenty: From the one they do gather Cotton: another yields them *Capoe*, a kind of Cotton-wool extremely fine, and so short that 'tis impossible to spin it, to them it serves instead of Down.

Trees which produce Oyls or Gums. From certain Trees they extract several Oyls which they mix in Ciments, to render them more binding. A wall that is plaister'd therewith, is whiter, and bears as good a Polish as Marble; and a Balon made of one of these Ciments preserves water better than glazed Earth. They do likewise make better Mortar than ours: by reason that in the water which they use, they do boyl a certain bark, the skins of Oxen, or Buffalo's, and Sugar. A kind of Trees very common in their Woods yields that Gum, which composes the body of that excellent Varnish, which we see on several works of *Japan*, and *China*. The *Portuguese* do call this Gum *Cheyram*, a word perhaps derived from *Cheyra*, which signifies a *Perfume*, although this Gum has not any Odor of it self. The *Siameses* do not well know how to put it in use. At *Siam* I saw a *Tunquinese* of this Trade, but he wrought nothing well for want perhaps of a certain Oil which was necessary to mix with the *Cheyram*, and which he supplied, as he could, by a much worse. I would have brought him to *France*, had he not been afraid to pass the Sea, as he had promised me at first. In a word, some say that the best way to render the Varnish more curious, is to lay on the more coverings, but this is to make it much dearer. The Relations of *China* do also declare, that there are two different Materials for the Varnish, and that the one is much better than the other. The *Cheyram* is proved by a drop thereof pour'd into Water; and if this drop sinks to the bottom without separating, the *Cheyram* is good.

Trees whose Bark serves to make Paper. The *Siameses* make Paper of old Cotton rags, and likewise of the bark of a Tree named *Ton coi*, which they pound as they do the old rags: but these Papers have a great deal less Equality, Body and Whiteness than ours. The *Siameses* cease not to write thereon with *China Ink*. Yet most frequently they black them, which renders them smoother, and gives them a greater body; and then they write thereon with a kind of *Crayon*, which is made only of a clayish Earth dry'd in the Sun. Their Books are not bound, and consist only in a very long Leaf, which they roll not up as our Ancestors did theirs, but which they fold in and out like a Fan: and the way which the Lines are wrote, is according to the length of the folds, and not according to their breadth. Besides this they write with a Styletto and the Leaves of a Tree resembling the Palm: This Tree they call *Tan*, and these Leaves *Bailan*; they cut them in a very long and narrow Square, and on these Tables are write the Tables and Prayers, which the *Talapouts* do sing in their Temples.

The *Siameses* have also Timber proper for the building of Ships, and furnishing them with Masts: But they having no Hemp, their Cordages are made of the *Brou* * of *Coco*, and their Sails are Mats of great Rushes: These Equipments do not countervail ours by much; but their Sails have this advantage, that spontaneously supporting themselves, they do better receive the Wind, when it is near it; that is to say when it blows as much against us as possibly it can, without being contrary to the Course.

* *Brou* is a green Bark or skin which is on the *Coco*, like as on our Nuts: but that of the *Coco* is three fingers thick, and its Fibers may be twisted into a Cord.

In fine, the *Siamese* have Timber proper for building of Houses, for Waincotting and Carving; they have both light and very heavy Wood, some easie to cleave, and others which cleaveth not, what Wedges soever it receives. This last is called by the *Europeans*, *Wood-Mary*, and is better than any to make the Ribs of Ships. That which is heavy and tough is called *Iron-wood*, very well known in our Islands of *America*, and it is affirmed in process of time it eats the Iron. They have a Wood which for its Lightness and Colour some conceive to be Fur, but it takes the Carver's Chisel in so many different ways without splitting that I question whether we have any like it in *Europe*.

But above all, the *Siamese* have Trees so high and so strait, that one alone is sufficient to make a Boat or *Balon*, as the *Portuguese* speak, between 16 and 20 Fathom long. They hollow the Tree, and then by the heat of the Fire enlarge the Capacity thereof; which done, they raise the sides with an edge, that is to say with a Board of the same length: And in fine, at both the ends they fasten a Prow and a Poop very high, and a little bending out, frequently adorn'd with sculpture and gilding, and with some pieces of Mother of Pearl.

Nevertheless amongst so many different sorts of Wood, they have none of those which we know in *Europe*.

They have not been able to raise any Mulberry Trees, and for this reason they have no Silk-worms. No Flax also grows amongst them, nor in any other place of *India*, or at least it is not in any esteem. The Cotton which they have in abundance is, they say, more agreeable and more healthful to them; by reason that Cotton-cloth grows not cold by being wet with sweat, and consequently occasions not the catching cold, as Linnen does.

They have the Cinnamon Tree, inferior indeed to that of the Island of *Ceylon*, but better than any other; they have the *Sapan*, and other Woods proper for Dying.

They have also the Wood *Aquila* or *Aloes*, not so good indeed as the *Calam*. Wood *Aquila* of *Cochinchina*, but better than the Wood *Aquila* of any other Country. This Wood is found only in pieces, by reason they are only certain rotten places in Trees of a certain kind. And every Tree of this same Species has it not, and those which have, have them not all in the same place; so that it requires a tedious search in the Wood. 'Twas formerly very dear at *Paris*, but is at present to be had at a reasonable rate.

CHAP. V.

Concerning the Mines of Siam.

NO Country has a greater Reputation of being rich in Mines than the Country of *Siam*, and the great quantity of Idols and other cast works which are there seen, evinces that they have been better cultivated there in former times, than now they are. 'Tis believed likewise that they thence extracted that great quantity of Gold, wherewith their Superstition has adorned not only their almost innumerable Idols, but the Waincot and Roofs of their Temples. They do likewise daily discover Pits anciently dug, and the remains of a great many Furnaces, which are thought to have been abandon'd during the ancient Wars of *Pegu*.

Nevertheless the King that now reigns has not been able to find any Vein of Gold or Silver, that is worth the pains that he has therein employed; although he hath applied unto this work some *Europeans*, and amongst the rest a *Spaniard* that came from *Mexico*, who found, if not a great fortune, at least his Subsistence for twenty years, even to his Death, by flattering the Avarice of this Prince, with the imaginary promises of infinite Treasures. After having dug and min'd in several places, they light only on some very mean Copper Mines, the inter-

mixt with a little Gold and Silver : Five hundred weight of Ore scarce yielding an Ounce of Metal ; neither understood they how to make the separation of Metals.

Tambac.

But the King of *Siam*, to render his mixture more precious, caus'd some Gold to be added thereunto : and this is what they call *Tambac*. 'Tis said that the Mines of the Isle of *Borneo* do naturally produce it very Rich : and the scarceness augments the price thereof, as it formerly increas'd that of the famous *Corinthian* Brass ; but certainly that which makes the true value thereof amongst the *Siameses*, is the quantity of Gold wherewith it is thought to be mixed. When their Avarice creates desires it is for the Gold, and not for the *Tambac* ; and we have seen that when the King of *Siam* has ordered Crucifixes to be made to present to the Christians, the most noble and smallest part, which is the *Christ*, has been of Gold, the Cross alone of *Tambac*. *Vincent le Blanc* relates, that the *Peguins* have a mixture of Lead and Copper, which he calls sometimes *Ganze*, and sometimes *Ganza*, and of which he reports that they make Statues, and a small Money which is not stamp'd with the Kings Coin, but which every one has a right to make.

Mr. Vincent the Physician retained by the King of Siam to work in his Mines.

From *Siam* we brought back *Mr. Vincent* the Physician. He departed from *France*, to go into *Persia*, with the late Bishop of *Babylon*, and the report of the arrival of the King's first Ships at *Siam*, made him to go thither as well out of a desire to travel, as in hopes of procuring his return into *France*. He understood Mathematicks and Chymistry, and the King of *Siam* retained him some time at the work in his Mines.

What he relates concerning the Mines of Siam.

He inform'd me that he rectified the labours of the *Siameses* in some things, so that they obtain a little more profit than they did. He shew'd them a Mine of very good Steel at the top of a Mountain, which had been already discovered, and which they perceiv'd not. He discovered to them one of Crystal, one of Antimony, one of Emeril, and some others, with a Quarry of white Marble. Besides this, he found out a Gold Miné, which to him appear'd very rich, as far as he was able to judge without trying it ; but he has not shew'd it them. Several *Siameses*, most *Talapoins*, came secretly to consult him about the Art of purifying and separating Metals, and brought him divers specimens of very rich Ore. From some he extract'd a very good quantity of fine Silver, and from others, the mixture of several Metals.

Tin and Lead.

As for Tin and Lead, the *Siameses* have long since improv'd it from very plentiful Mines, and though not very skilful, yet they cease not to get a considerable revenue by it. This Tin, or Calin, as the *Portuguese* report, is sold through all *Indias*. 'Tis soft and basely purified, and a specimen thereof is seen in the common Tea Boxes or Cannisters, which come from this Country. But to render it harder and whiter, like that of the finest Tea Boxes, they mix it with Cadmia, a sort of Mineral easily reducible to powder, which being melted with the Copper, makes it yellow : but it renders both these Metals more brittle : And 'tis this white Tin which they call *Tentinague*. This is what *Mr. Vincent* relates on the subject of the Mines of *Siam*.

Mines of Loadstone.

In the Neighbourhood of the City of *Louvo* they have a Mountain of Loadstone. They have another also near *Jonsalam*, a City seated in an Island of the Gulph of *Bengal*, which is not above the distance of a Mans voice from the Coast of *Siam* : but the Loadstone which is dug at *Jonsalam* loses its vertue in three or four Months ; I know not whether it is not the same in that of *Louvo*.

Precious Stones.

In their Mountains they find very curious *Agate*, and *Mr. Vincent* inform'd me that he has seen, in the hands of the *Talapoins*, who secretly busie themselves in these researches, some samples or pieces of Saphires and Diamonds that came out of the Mine. He assur'd me also that some particular Persons having found some Diamonds, and given them to the King's Officers, were retir'd to *Pegu* by reason they had not receiv'd any recompence,

Steel.

I have already said that the City of *Campeng-pet* is famous for Mines of excellent Steel. The Inhabitants of the Country do forge Arms thereof after their fashion, as Sabres, Poniards, and Knives. The Knife which they call *Pen* is used by all, and is not look'd upon as Arms, although it may serve upon occasion : The blade thereof

thereof is three or four Fingers broad, and about a Foot long. The King gives the Sabre and the Poniard. They wear the Poniard on the left side, hanging a little before. The Portuguese do call it *Christ*, a word corrupted from *Crid*, which the *Siamese* use. This word is borrow'd from the *Malayan* Language, which is famous throughout the East, and the *Crids* which are made at *Achim* in the Isle of *Sumatra*, do pass for the best of all. As for the Sabre, a Slave always carries it before his Master on his right shoulder, as we carry the Muisquet on the left.

They have Iron Mines which they know how to melt, and some have inform'd Iron-me that they have but little thereof; besides, they are bad Forge-men. For their Gallies they have only wooden Anchors, and to the end that these Anchors may sink to the bottom, they fasten stones unto them. They have neither Pins, nor Needles, nor Nails, nor Chisels, nor Saws. They use not a Nail in building their Houses, altho' they be all of Wood. Every one makes Pins of Bambou, even as our Ancestors us'd Thorns for this purpose. To them there comes Padlocks from *Japan*, some of Iron, which are good; and others of Copper, which are very naught.

They do make very bad Gunpowder. The defect, they say, proceeds from Salt-Petre the Salt-Petre which they gather from their Rocks, where it is made of the dung and Powder of Batts, Animals which are exceeding large and very plentiful throughout *India*. But whether this Salt-Petre be good or bad, the King of *Siam* sells a great deal of it to Strangers.

Having describ'd the natural Riches of the Mountains and Forests of *Siam*, 'twould be proper in this place to speak of the Elephants, Rhinoceros, Tygers, and all other savage Beasts wherewith they are stored: yet seeing this matter has been sufficiently explicated by a great many others, I shall omit it, to pass on to the inhabited and cultivated Lands.

C H A P. VI.

Of the cultivated Lands, and their Fertility.

They are not Stony, it being very difficult to find a Flint; and this makes me to believe of the Country of *Siam*, what some have reported of *Egypt*: that it has been gradually formed of the clayish Earth which the Rain-waters have carry'd down from the Mountains. Before the mouth of the *Menam*, there is a Bank of Owse, which, in the Sea-phrafe, is call'd the Bar, and which prohibits entrance to great Ships. 'Tis probable that it will increase itself by little and little, and will in time make a new Shore to the firm Land.

'Tis therefore this Mud descending from the Mountains, that is the real cause of the Fertility of *Siam*, where-ever the Inundation extends itself. In other, and especially on the highest places, all is dry'd and burnt with the Sun, in a little time after the Rains. Under the Torrid Zone, and likewise in *Spain*, whose Climate is more temperate, if the Lands are naturally fertile, (as for Example, between *Marcia* and *Cartagena*, where the Seed yields sometimes an hundred fold) they are nevertheless so subject to Drought, Insects, and other Inconveniences, that it frequently happens that they are deprived of the whole Harvest several years together: And 'tis this which betides all the Countries of *India* which are not subject to be overflowed, and which besides the barrenness of the Soil, do suffer the ravages of contagious and pestilential Distempers which succeed it. But the annual Inundation gives to *Siam* the assurance and plenty of the Rice Harvest, and renders this Kingdom the Nourisher of several others.

Besides the Inundations fattening the Land, it destroys the Insects; altho' it destroys the always leaves a great many, which extremely incommode. Nature instructs all the Animals of *Siam* to avoid the Inundation. The Birds which perch not in

our Countries, as Partridges and Pigeons, do all perch in that. The Pismires doubly prudent, do here make their Nests and Magazines on Trees.

White Ants
at Siam.

There are white Ants, which, amongst other ravages which they make, do pierce Books through and through. The Missionaries are oblig'd to preserve theirs, by varnishing them over the cover and edges with a little *Cheyram*, which hinders them not from opening. After this precaution, the Ants have no more power to bite, and the Books are more agreeable, by reason that this Gum being mixt with nothing that colours it, has the same lustre as the Glasses wherewith we cover Pictures in Miniature. This would be no dear nor difficult Experiment, to try whether the *Cheyram* would not defend the wood of our Beds against Bugs. 'Tis this same *Cheyram*, which being spread upon Canvas, makes it appear like Horn. Therewith they us'd to environ the great Cresset-lights, which some reported to be of Horn, and all of a piece. Sometimes also those little Caps varnish'd with red, which come to us from *Japan*, and whose lightness astonishes us, do consist only of a double Cloth put into the form of a Cup, and cover'd over with this Gum mixt with a colour, which we call *Lacca*, or *Chinese Varnish*, as I have already declar'd: these Caps last not long, when too hot Liquors are put therein.

The *Marin-gonius*.

To return to the Insects, which we have begun occasionally to speak of, the *Marin-gonius* are of the same Nature as our Gnats; but the heat of the Climat gives them so much strength, that shamois Stockings defend not our Legs against their Stings. Nevertheless it seems possible to know how to deal with them; for the Natives of the Country, and the Europeans that have inhabited there for several years, were not so marked with them as we were.

The *Millepede*.

The *Millepede* or *Palmer* is known at *Siam*, as in the Isles of *America*. This little Reptile is so called, because it has a great number of feet along its body, all very short in proportion to its length, which is about five or six Inches. What it has most singular (besides the scales in form of rings, which cover its body, and which insert themselves one into the other in its motions) is, that it pinches equally with its head and tail, but its Stings, tho' painful, are not mortal. A French Man of that Crew which went to *Siam* with us, and whom we left there in perfect health, suffer'd himself to be stung in his Bed above a quarter of an hour, without daring to lay hold on the Worm to relieve himself. The *Siamese* report, that the *Millepede* has two heads at the extremities of its body, and that it guides itself six months in the year with the one, and six months with the other.

The Ignorance of the *Siamese* in things Natural.

But their History of Animals must not easily be credited, they understand not Bodies better than Souls; and in all matters their inclination is to imagine Wonders, and persuade themselves so much the more easily to believe them, as they are more incredible. What they report of a sort of Lizard named *Tac-quay*, proceeds from an Ignorance and Credulity very singular. They imagine that this Animal feeling his Liver grow too big, makes the Cry which has impos'd on him the name of *Tac-quay*, to call another Insect to its succor; and that this other Insect entering into his Body at his mouth, eats the overplus of the Liver, and after this repast retires out of the *Tac-quay's* body, by the same way that he enter'd therein.

Shining Flies.

The shining Flies, like Locusts, have four wings, which do all appear when the Fly takes a flight; but the two thinnest of them are concealed under the strongest when the Fly is at repose. We hardly saw these little Animals, by reason that the rainy time was past when we landed. The North-winds, which begin when the Rains cease, either kill them, or drive them all away. They have some light in their Eyes, but their greatest splendor proceeds from under their wings, and glitters only in the Air, when the wings are display'd. What some report therefore is not true, that they might be us'd in the Night instead of Candles; for tho' they had light enough, what method could be contriv'd to make them always fly, and keep them at a due distance to illuminate? But thus much may suffice to be spoken concerning the Insects of *Siam*; they would afford matter for large Volumes to know them all.

I shall

I shall say only that there are not fewer in the River and Gulph, than on the Land; and that in the River there are some very dangerous, which is the reason that the rich Men do bathe themselves only in houses of Bambou. Infects in the waters.

CHAP VII.

Of the Grain of Siam.

RICE is the principal Harvest of the *Siameses*, and their best Nourishment; Rice it refreshes and fattens: And we found our Ship's Crew express some regret, when after a three months allowance thereof, they were return'd to Biskets, and yet the Bisket was very good, and well kept.

The *Siameses* know by experience how to measure the water, fire and time necessary to the Rice, without bursting the Grain, and so it serves them for Bread. Not that they mix it with all their other Food as we do Bread; when they eat Flesh or Fish for example, they eat the one and the other without Rice; and when they eat Rice, they eat it separately. They squeeze it a little between the ends of their Fingers to reduce it into a Paste, and so they put it into their mouth, as our Poor do eat Pottage. The *Chineses* do never touch any meat but with two small Sticks squar'd at the end, which do serve them instead of a Fork. They hold to their lower Lip a small Porcelaine or China Cup, wherein is their portion of Rice; and holding it steady with their left hand, they strike the Rice into their mouth with the two Sticks which they hold in their right hand. The way of boiling it in pure water;

The *Levantine*, or Eastern People, do sometimes boil Rice with Flesh and Pepper, and then put some Saffron thereunto, and this Dish they call *Pilau*. This is not the practice of the *Siameses*: but generally they boil the Rice in clear water, as I have said; and sometimes they boil it with milk, as we do on fasting days. Or in milk.

At Siam, in the Lands high enough to avoid the Inundation, there grows Wheat. Wheat: they water them either with watering Pots like those in our Gardens, or by overflowing it with the Rain-water, which they keep in Cisterns much higher than these Lands. But either by reason of the Care or Expence, or that the Rice suffices for common use, the King of Siam only has Wheat; and perhaps more out of Curiosity, than a real Gusto. They call it *Kaou Possali*, and the word *Kaou* simply signifieth Rice. Now these terms being neither *Arabian*, nor *Turkish*, nor *Persian*, I doubt of what was told me, that Wheat was brought to Siam by the *Adors*. The French which are settled there, do import Meal from *Surrai*; altho' near Siam there is a Windmill to grind Corn, and another near *Louvo*.

In a word, the Bread which the King of Siam gave us, was so dry, that the Rice boil'd in pure water, how insipid soever, was more agreeable to me. I less wonder therefore at what the Relations of China report, that the Sovereign of this great Kingdom, altho' he has Bread, does rather prefer Rice: yet some Europeans assur'd me, that the wheaten Bread of Siam is good, and that the driness of ours must proceed from a little Rice flower, which is doubtless mixt with the Wheat, for fear perhaps lest the Bread should fail. Wheaten Bread too dry at Siam.

At Siam I have seen Pease different from ours. The *Siameses*, like us, do make more than one Crop, but they make only one in a year upon the same Land: not that the Soil was not good enough, in my opinion, to yield two Crops in a year, as some have related concerning some other Cantons of India, if the Inundation did not last so long. They have Turkey-Wheat only in their Gardens. They do boil or parch the whole Ear thereof, without unhusking or breaking off the Grains, and they eat the inside. Other Grain.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the Husbandry, and the difference of the Seasons.

Oxen and Buffalo's employ'd in Husbandry.

They equally employ Oxen and Buffalo's in Husbandry. They guide them with a Rope put through a hole which they make in the Cartilage that separates the Nostrils: And to the end that the Rope may not slip when they draw it, they do tie a knot on each side. This same Cord runs also through a hole, which is at the end of the draught Tree of their Plough.

The *Siamese* Plough.

The Plough of the *Siamese* is plain, and without Wheels. It consists in a long Beam which is the Rudder, in another crooked piece which is the Handle, and in another shorter and stronger piece, fastned almost at Right Angles underneath at the end of the Handle; and 'tis this Third which bears the share. They fasten not these four pieces with Nails, but with leather Thongs.

How they cleanse the Rice from the Chaff.

To unhusk the Rice, they employ large Beasts; when it is trodden out, they let it fall by little and little from a very high place, to the end that the wind may carry away the Chaff. And because the Rice has an hard Skin like Speil; a sort of Corn very common in *Flanders*, and other places, they bruise it in a great wooden Mortar, with a Pestle of the same; or in a Hand-mill, all the pieces of which are also of Wood. They knew not how to describe them to me.

Three Seasons only, and two sorts of years.

They know only three Seasons, the *Winter*, which they call *Nanaon*, the Beginning of Cold; the *Little Summer*, which they call *Naron*, the Beginning of Heat; and the *Great Summer*, which they call *Naron-yai*, the Beginning of Great Heat; and which strips the Trees of their Leaves, as the Cold does ours. They have two years together consisting of twelve months, and a third of thirteen.

The names of their days from the Planets.

They have no word to express *Week*; but, like us, they call the seven days by the Planets, and their days correspond to ours: I mean, that when it is Monday here, it is Monday there, and so of the rest; but the day begins about six hours sooner there, than here. Amongst the Names they have given to the Planets, that of *Mercury* is *Pont*, a *Persian* word, which signifies an Idol; from whence comes *Pont-Gheda*, a Temple of false Gods; and *Pagode* comes from *Pont-Gheda*.

From whence they begin their years.

They begin their year on the first day of the Moon in *November* or *December*, according to certain Rules; and they do not always denote the years by their number, but by the names they give them; for they make use of a Cycle of sixty years, like the other Eastern Nations.

The Cycle of 60 years.

A Sexagenary Cycle is a Revolution of sixty years, as a week is a Revolution of seven days; and they have names for the years of the Cycle, as we have for the days of the week. 'Tis true, I have not been able to discover that they have more than twelve different names, which they repeat five times in every Cycle to arrive at the number of sixty, and in my opinion with some additions which do make the differences thereof. They will date therefore, for instance, from the year of the *Pigg*, or of the *Great Serpent*, which amongst them are the names of the year; and they will not always denote what year of their *Aera* this shall be, as we sometimes date a Letter upon one of the days of the week to which we set down the name, without noting what number it is in the month. At the end of this Relation, I will give you the twelve names of the years in *Siamese*, with those of the seven days of the week.

Their months.

Their months are vulgarly esteem'd to consist of thirty days. I say vulgarly, because that in Astronomical exactness there may be some month longer or shorter; but the *Siamese* do observe it otherwise than we, in that we give names to the months, and they do not. They call them by their order, the first month, second month, &c.

The distinction of their Seasons.

The two first Months, which answer almost to our Months of *December* and *January*, do make their whole *Winter*; the third, fourth, and fifth, do belong to their *little Summer*, the seven others to their *great Summer*. Thus they have *Winter*

Winter at the same time as we; by reason they lye to the North line like us. But their greatest Winter is at least as hot as our greatest Summer. After the time of the Inundation they cover the Plants in their Gardens from the heats of the Sun, as we do sometimes cover ours from the cold of the Night or Winter: But as to their Persons, the diminution of the heat appears unto them a very incommodious cold. The little Summer is their Spring, and they utterly ignore the Autumn. They only reckon a great Summer; although it seems that they might reckon two after the manner of the Ancients, who have written of *India*, seeing that they have the Sun perpendicularly over their heads twice a year; once when it comes from the Line to the Tropick of Cancer, and another time when it returns from the Tropick of Cancer towards the Line.

Their Winter is dry, and their Summer rainy. The Torrid Zone would doubtless be uninhabitable, as the Ancients have held, were it not for that marvellous Providence which makes the Sun continually to draw the Clouds and Rains after it, and the Wind incessantly to blow there from one of the Poles, when the Sun is toward the other. Thus at *Siam* in Winter, the Sun being in the middle of the Line, or towards the Antarctick Pole, the North-winds do constantly prevail, and temper the Air very sensibly to refresh it. In Summer, when the Sun is on the North of the Line, and perpendicularly over the head of the *Siamer*, the South-winds which continually blow there, do cause continual Rains, or at least do make the weather always inclined to Rain; leaving most People in doubt whether this Season of Rains ought not to be called the Winter of *Siam*. 'Tis this constant Rule of the Winds, which the *Portuguese* have called *Monsoons*, and we after them *Moussons* (*Moussons d'Est*, according to *Ozorius* and *Adriani*.) And this is the reason that the Ships can hardly arrive at the Bar of *Siam* during the six Months of the North-winds, and that they can hardly depart thence during the six Months of the South-winds. At the end of this work I will give the order of the Winds and Tides in the Gulph of *Siam*, in favour of those that love to reason on Philosophical matters.

The *Siamers* do not give many forms to their Lands. They till them and sow them, when the Rains have sufficiently softened them; and they gather their harvest when the waters are retired, and sometimes when they are yet remaining on the ground, and they can go only by Boat. All the land that is overflowed is good for Rice, and 'tis said that the Ear always surmounts the waters; and that if they encrease a foot in twenty four hours, the Rice grows a foot also in twenty four hours: but though it be aver'd that this happens sometimes, I cannot without much difficulty believe it in so vast an Inundation: And I rather conceive that when the Inundation surmounts the Rice at any time, it rots it.

They gather Rice also in divers Cantons of the Kingdom which the Rains do not overflow; and this is more substantial, better relish, and keeps longer. When it has grown long enough in the Land where it was sown, it is transplanted into another, which is prepared after this manner. They overflow it, as we do the Salt Marshes, until it be thoroughly soft; and for this purpose it is necessary to have high Cisterns, or rather to keep the Rain-water in the Field itself by little Banks made all round. Then they let the water go to feed the Land, level it, and in fine, transplant the Rice-Roots one after the other, by thrusting them in with the Thumb.

I am greatly inclin'd to believe, that the Ancient *Siamers* lived only upon Fruits and Fish, as still do several people of the Coasts of *Africa*; and that in process of time Husbandry has been taught them by the *Chinese*. We read in the History of *China* that 'twas anciently the King himself, that annually first set his hand to the Plough in this great Kingdom, and that of the Crop which his Labour yielded him, he made the Bread for the Sacrifices. The Lawful King of *Tonquin* and *Cochinchina* together, who is called the *Bandes*, likewise observe this Custom of first breaking up the Lands every year; and of all the Royal Functions, this is almost the only one remaining to him. The most important are exercised by two Hereditary Governors, the one of *Tonquin*, and the other of *Cochinchina*, who wage war, and who are the true Sovereigns; although they

Of the Monsoons.

The time of ploughing and reaping.

Another sort of Rice.

The original of Agriculture with the *Siamers*.

The Ceremo-
ny of the *Siam*
touching
Agriculture.

they profess to acknowledge the *Bua*, which is at *Tonquin*, for their Sovereign. The King of *Siam* did formerly also set his hand to the Plough, on a certain day of the year : For about an Age since, and upon some superstitious Observation of a bad Omen, he labours no more ; but leaves this Ceremony to an imaginary King, which is purposely created every year : yet they will not permit him to bear the Title of King, but that of *Oc-ya-Kaon*, or *Oc-ya* of the *Rice*. He is mounted upon an Ox, and rides to the place where he must plough, attended with a great train of Officers that are obedient to him. This Masquerade for one day gets him wherewithal to live on the whole year. And by the same superstition has deterred the Kings themselves. It is look'd upon as ominous and unlucky to the person. I suspect therefore that this custom of causing the lands to be ploughed by the Prince, came from *China*, to *Tonquin*, and *Siam*, with the Art of Husbandry.

It is Politick
and Superstitious
both together.

It may perhaps have been invented only to gain credit to Husbandry, by the example of Kings themselves ; but it is intermixt with a great many superstitions, to supplicate the good and evil Spirits, whom they think able to help or hurt the goods of the Earth. Amongst other things, the *Oc-ya-Kaon* offers them a Sacrifice, in the open field, of an heap of Rice-heaves, whereunto he sets fire with his own hand.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Gardens of the Siamces, and occasionally of their Liquors.

Their Pulse
and Roots.
The Potatoe.

THE *Siamces* are not less addicted to the manuring of Gardens, than to the ploughing of Arable Lands. They have Pulse and Roots, but for the most part different from ours. Amongst the Roots the *Potatoe* deserves a particular mention. It is of the form and size almost of a *Parfenep*, and the inside thereof is sometimes white, sometimes red, sometimes purple ; but I never saw any but the first sort : Being roasted under the Ashes, it eats like the *Chestnut*. The Isles of *America* made it known to us ; it there frequently supplies, as some report, the place of Bread. At *Siam* I have seen *Chibbols*, and no *Onions*, *Garlick*, *Turneps*, *Cucumbers*, *Citruls*, *Water-melons*, *Parsley*, *Bawn*, *Sorrel*. They have no true *Melons*, nor *Strawberries*, nor *Raspberries*, nor *Artichocks*, but a great deal of *Asparagus*, of which they do not eat. They have neither *Sallory*, nor *Beets*, nor *Coleworts*, nor *Coleflore*, nor *Turneps*, nor *Parfeneps*, nor *Carrots*, nor *Leeks*, nor *Lettuces*, nor *Chervil*, nor most of the Herbs whereof we compose our *Sallads*. Yet the *Dutch* have most of all these Plants at *Batavia*, which is a sign that the Soil of *Siam* would be proper thereunto. It bears large *Mufromes*, but few and ill tasted. It yields no *Truffles*, nor so much as that insipid and scentless kind, which the *Spaniards* do call *Criadillas de tierra*, and which they put into their pot.

Cucumbers,
Chibbols,
Garlick,
Radishes.

The *Siamces* do eat *Cucumbers* raw, as they do throughout the East, and also in *Spain* ; and it is not impossible but their *Cucumbers* may be more wholesome than ours, seeing that *Vinegar* doth not harden them : They look upon them, and call them a kind of *Water-Melons*. Mr. *Vincent* inform'd me that a *Persian* will eat 36 pound weight of *Melons*, or *Cucumbers*, at the beginning of the season of these Fruits to purge himself. The *Chibbols*, *Garlick*, and *Radishes* have a sweeter taste at *Siam*, than in this Country. These sort of Plants do lose their Rankness by the great Heat : And I easily believe what those who have experienced it have assured me, that nothing is more pleasant than the *Onions* of *Agypt*, which the *Israelites* so exceedingly regretted.

Flowers.

I have seen a great many *Tuberoles* in the Gardens of *Siam*, and no *Roses*, nor *Gillyflowers* ; but it is said there are plenty of *Gillyflowers*, and few *Roses*, and that these

these Flowers have less scent here than in *Europe*; so that the *Roses* have hardly any. The *Jasmine* is likewise so rare, that 'tis said, there are none but at the King's House. We were presented with two or three Flowers as a wonder. They have a great many *Amaranthus*, and *Tricolors*. Except these most of the Flowers and Plants which adorn our Gardens, are unknown to them: But in their stead they have others which are peculiar to them, and which are very agreeable for their Beauty and Odor. I have remark'd of some that they smell only in the Night, by reason that the heat of the day dissipates all their Spirits. Our Flowers have most scent about the Evening, and we have some, but few, that smell only at Night.

Whatever has not naturally a great deal of taste and smell, cannot keep them Why there is in Countries extremely hot. Thus though there be Grapes in *Perfia*, and at *Su-* no Muscadine rats, yet there can be no Muscadine Grapes, what care soever is therein employ'd. The best Plants, which are transported thither from *Europe*, do presently degenerate, and yield the second year ordinary Grapes only. Grapes in *Perfia* nor at *Swatt*.

But at *Siam*, where the Climate is much hotter, there are no good Grapes. Nor Grapes The few Vines which are planted at *Louvo*, in the King's Garden, produce only at *Siam*. some bad Grapes, which are small and of a bitter taste.

Pure Water is their ordinary Drink; they love only to drink it perfum'd, Pure water whereas to our Palate Water which has no smell, is the best. As the *Siamses* the ordinary drink of the *Siamses*. go not to draw it at the Springs, which are doubtless too remote, it is wholesome only when it has been settled more or fewer days, according as the Inundation is higher or lower, or wholly run out: For when the Waters retire, and they are filled with Mud, and perhaps with the ill Juices which they take from the Earth, or when the River is re-entred into its Channel sufficiently muddy, they are more corrosive, do cause *Dilenteries* and *Lasks*, and cannot be drunk without danger, till they have let them stand in great Jars or Pitchers, the space of three Weeks or a Month.

At *Louvo* the Waters are much more unwholesome than at *Siam*; by reason The Waters that the whole River flows not thither, but only an Arm, which has been of *Louvo* and turned thither, which runs always decreasing after the Rains, and at last leaves of *Tee Pouffone*. its Channel dry. The King of *Siam* drinks water from a great Cistern made in the Fields, on which is kept a continual Watch. Besides that this Prince has a little house called *Tlee Pouffone*, or *Rich Sea*, about a League from *Louvo*. It is seated on the brink of certain Low-lands, about two or three Leagues in extent, which receive the Rain-waters and preserve them. This little Sea is of an irregular figure, its Shores are neither handfom nor even; but its Waters are wholesome, by reason they are deep and settled, and I have also heard that the King of *Siam* drinks thereof.

For pleasure and conversation the *Siamses* do take *Tea*, I mean the *Siamses* of *Tee*. the City of *Siam*. For the use of *Tea* is unknown in all the other places of the Kingdom. But at *Siam* the Custom is thoroughly settled, and 'tis amongst them a necessary Civility to present *Tea* to all that visit them. They call it *Tcha*, as do the *Chineses*, and have not two Terms, the one for what we call *Tea*, and the other for what we call *Cha*, or Flower of *Tea*. 'Tis certain that it is not a Flower: But to assert whether they are the budding Leaves, and consequently the tenderest, or the highest, and consequently the less nourished, or the point of the Leaves, which have been boil'd at *China*, or a kind of particular *Tea*; is what I cannot determine, by reason that various Accounts have been given me thereof.

The *Siamses* do reckon three sorts of *Tea*, the *Tchaboui* or *Boui Tea*, which is Three sorts of reddish, which some say fattens and is astringent; 'tis look'd upon at *Siam* as a *Tea*. Remedy for the Flux. The *Samlou Tea*, which on the contrary purges gently. And the third sort of *Tea*, which has no particular Name, that I know, and which neither loosens nor binds.

The *Chineses* and all the Orientals, use *Tea* as a Remedy against the Head-ach: *Tea* is a sudorific. But then they make it stronger, and after having drunk five or six Cups, they rick. lye down in their bed, cover themselves up, and sweat. It is not very difficult, in such hot Climates, for Sudorifics to operate, and they are looked upon there almost as general Remedies.



The manner
of preparing
Tea.

They prepare the *Tea* in this manner. They have Copper Pots tinn'd on the inside, wherein they boil the Water; and it boils in an instant, by reason the Copper thereof is very thin. This Copper comes from *Japan*, if my Memory fails me not; and 'tis so easie to work, that I question whether we have any so pliant in *Europe*. These Pots are called *Bouli*; and on the other hand they have *Bouli* of red Earth, which is without taste, tho' without Varnish. They first rinse the Earthen *Bouli* with boiling water to heat it, then they put in as much *Tea*, as one can take up with the Finger and Thumb, and afterwards fill it with boiling water; and after having covered it, they still pour boiling water on the outside, they stop not the Spout as we do. When the *Tea* is sufficiently infused, that is to say when the Leaves are precipitated, they pour the Liquor into China dishes; which at first they fill only half, to the end that if it appear too strong or too deep, they may temper it, by pouring in pure water, which they still keep boiling in the Copper *Bouli*. Nevertheless if they will still drink, they do again fill the Earthen *Bouli* with this boiling water, and so they may do several times without adding any more *Tea*, until they see that the water receives no tincture. They put no Sugar into the Dishes, by reason they have none refin'd which is [not] candy, and the candy melts too slowly. They do therefore take a little in their mouth, which they champ as they drink their *Tea*. When they would have no more *Tea*, they turn the Cup down on the Saucer; because that 'tis the greatest incivility among them to refuse any thing, and that if they leave the Cup standing, they fail not to serve them again with *Tea*, which they are oblig'd to receive. But they forbear to fill the Dish, unless they would testify to him unto whom they present it full, that 'tis, as some say, for once, and that it is not expected that he ever come again to the House.

Excellent water
necessary
for Tea.

Whether it is
necessary to
drink the Tea
hot.

The most experienced do say that the Water cannot be too clear for *Tea*, that Cistern-water is the best as being the most pure, and that the finest *Tea* in the world becomes bad in water, which is not excellent.

In a word, if the *Chinese* drink *Tea* so hot, 'tis not perhaps that they have found it either more wholesom or more pleasant after this manner; for they drink all sorts of Liquor at the same degree of heat, unless the Tartars have now taught them, as it is said, to drink Ice. 'Tis true that the infusion of *Tea* is perform'd quicker in hot water than cold; but I have drunk with pleasure what I had infused cold for above a day.

The *Siamese* adhere not to *Tea*: they freely drink Wine, when they have it; altho' whatever inebriates is prohibited them by their Morality. The *English* and *Dutch* do sometimes bring it them from *Schiras* in *Persia*, or from *Europe*. Our *Bordeaux* and *Cher* Wines came very found to *Siam*, altho' they had twice pass'd the Line; and at our return the remainder of these Wines, was perhaps much stronger and better kept, than it would have been, had it continued always a shore. I say nothing concerning the Wines of *China* and *Japan*, which are only Beers exceedingly well mixt, but very pleasant. The *China* Wine, of which I have brought a bottle, would not keep to *France*, altho' the *Dutch* Beer kept very well to the *Indies*.

Other Li-
quors, *Tari*
and *Neri*.

The *Siamese* do likewise drink two sorts of Liquors, which are called *Tari* and *Neri*, and which they extract from two sorts of Trees called *Palmites*, from a name general to every Tree which has great Leaves, like the Palm-tree. The manner of collecting this drink is, in the Evening to make an Incision in the bark of the Tree, near the top of its Trunk, and to apply thereunto a Bottle as close as it is possible, luteing it with Clay, that the Air may not enter therein. The next Morning the Bottle is full, and this Bottle is generally a Pipe of great *Bambou*, to which the knot serves as a bottom. These two Liquors may also be collected in the day time, but it is said that then they are eager, and are used as Vinegar. The *Tari* is drawn from a sort of wild *Cocotier*, or *Coco-tree*, and *Neri* from the *Arequier*, a sort of Tree which I shall presently speak of.

Aqua vine pre-
ferred before
all, and of
what they
make it.

But as in hot Countries the continual dissipation of the Spirits, makes them desire what encreases them, they passionately esteem *Aqua Vita*, and the strongest more than the others. The *Siamese* do make it of Rice, and do frequently rack it with Lime. Of Rice they do at first make Beer, which they drink not;
but

but they convert it into *Aqua Vite* which they call *Loon*, and the Portuguese *Arak*, an Arabian word, which properly signifies *sweat*, and metaphorically *essence*, and by way of excellence *Aqua Vite*. Of the Rice Beer they likewise make *Vinegar*.

The English inhabiting at *Siam* do use a drink which they call *Punch*, and which the *Indians* do find very delicious. They put half a pint of Brandy or *Arak*, to a pint of Limonade with Nutmeg and a little Sea Bisket toasted and brake, and beat it all together until the Liquors be well mixed. The French call this drink *Boule Ponche*, and *Bonne Ponche*, from the two English words, a Bowl of Punch.

Punch, an English Drink.

In a word, the Moors of *Siam* drink *Coffee*, which comes to them from *Arabia*, and the Portuguese do drink *Chocolate*, when it comes to them from *Manila*, the chief of the *Philippines*, where it is brought from the Spanish West-Indies.

Coffee and Chocolate.

The *Siamese* do esteem fruit better than all things; they eat all the day long Fruits.

if they have it. But excepting *Oranges*, *Citrons* and *Pomegranates*, there is not at *Siam* any of the fruits that we know. The *Citrons* which they call *Ma-cron*, are small, full of Juice and very fowre, and the skin very smooth. They appeared to me of a singular quality, in that they are rotten on the inside, when their peel is found and entire. But they have moreover a kind of fowre, and no sweet Lemons, and on the contrary the *Oranges* and *Pomegranates* are all sweet; unless for fowre *Oranges* they would take the *Pampelhufer*, which have the taste and shape thereof, but which are as big as Melons and have not much Juice. The *Siamese* do with reason range them among the species of *Oranges*, and call them *Saum-ee*, and *Saum* signifies an *Orange*. Amongst the sweet *Oranges* the best have the Peel very green and rough; they call them *Saum-keou*, or *Crysal Oranges*; not that they have any transparency, but because they appear to them in their kind, of the repute of *Crysal*, which they highly value. They give of these *Saum-keou* to their sick, and sell them, as 'tis said, at five *sou* a piece when the season is past; a considerable price in a Country where a man commonly lives for two *Liards* a day.

Now tho' this sort of *Oranges* lasts not the whole year, yet there is always one sort or other. There is also of that Fruit which the Europeans call *Bananas*, or *Indian-Figs*, and the *Siamese* *Clouet*, all the year. All the other Fruits continue only a time. 'Tis at *Achem* only at the North Point of the Isle of *Sumatra*, that Nature produces them all at every season. Those excellent Canes of one single Shoot or Joynt, between nine and ten foot long, do grow only at *Achem*; but Rice, which is their principal nourishment, frequently fails them: and they do then dearly purchase it with the Gold, which they find so plentifully amongst them, that they condemn it without Philosophy.

Certain Fruits at every Season.

I designedly omit the Description of several Fruits, and refer it to the end of this work. I will now only speak of the *Areca*, and shall say of the *Indian* Fruits in general, that they have for the most part so strong a taste and smell, that one loves them not, till accustomed thereunto; and I think that then they do no hurt. By a contrary reason, our Fruits are at first insipid and without flavor, to him that is accustomed to the *Indian* Fruits.

The difference of the Fruits of Siam from ours.

The *Areca*, which the *Siamese* do call *Plow*, is a kind of great Acorn, which yet wants that wooden Cup wherein our Acorn grows: When this Fruit is yet tender, it has at the center or heart a greyish substance, which is as soft as Pap. As it dries it waxes yellower and harder, and the soft substance it has at the heart grows hard too: It is always very bitter and fawory. After having cut it into four parts with a Knife, they take a piece every time, and chew it with a Leaf resembling Ivy called *Betel* by the Europeans which are at the *Indies*, and *Mak* by the *Siamese*. They wrap it up to put it the more easily into the mouth, and do put on each a small quantity of Lime made of Cockle-shells, and redded by I know not what art. For this reason the *Indians* do always carry this sort of Lime in a very little China dish, for they put so little on every Leaf, that they consume not much in a day, altho they incessantly make use of the *Areca*, and the *Betel*. The *Areca* whilst tender wholly consumes in the Mouth, but the dry always leaves some remains.

The Areca and Betel.

Their effect. The sensible effect of this Acorn and this Leaf is to excite much spitting, if they care not to swallow the Juice; but it is good to spit out the two or three first Mouthfuls at least, to avoid swallowing the Lime. The other less sensible effects, but which are not doubted in the *Indies*, are to carry from the Gums, perhaps by reason of the Lime, whatever may prejudice them, and to fortify the Stomach, either by reason of the Juice that is swallowed at pleasure, and which may have this quality, or by reason of the superfluous moistures which they discharge by spitting. Thus have I never found any person at *Siam* with a stinking breath, which may be an effect of their natural Sobriety.

Another effect of the *Areca* and *Betel*. Now as the *Areca* and *Betel* do cause a red spittle independently on the red Lime which is mix'd therewith, so they leave a Vermilion Tincture on the Lips and Teeth. It passes over the Lips, but by little and little it thickens on the Teeth till they become black: So that persons that delight in neatness, do blacken their Teeth, by reason that otherwise the spittle of the *Areca* and *Betel*, mix'd with the natural whiteness of the Teeth, causes an unpleasant effect, which is remarked in the common People. I shall transiently declare, that the Vermilion Lips, which the *Siamese* saw in the Pictures of our Ladies which we had carried to this Country, made them to say that we must needs have in *France*, better *Betel* than theirs.

How they blacken their Teeth, and how they reddden the Nails of their little fingers. To blacken their Teeth, they do thereon put some pieces of very fowre Lemon, which they hold on their Jaws or Lips for an hour, or more. They report that this softens the Teeth a little. They afterwards rub them with a Juice, which proceeds either from a certain Root, or from the *Coco*, when they are burnt, and so the operation is perform'd. Yet it pleases them sometimes to relate that it continues three days, during which it is necessary, they say, to lye on their Belly and eat no solid Food: But some have assur'd me that this is not true, and that it is sufficient to eat nothing hot for two or three days. I believe rather that their Teeth are too much set on edge, to be able for some time to eat any thing solid. It is necessary continually to renew this operation to make the effect thereof continue; for this Blackness sticks not so strong to the Teeth, but that it may be rub'd off with a burnt Crust of Bread reduc'd to Powder. They love also to reddden the Nails of their little Fingers, and for this end they scrape them, and then apply a certain Juice, which they extract from a little Rice bruised in Citron Juice with some Leaves of a tree, which in every thing resembles the Pomegranate Tree, but bears no Fruit.

Of the *Palmites* in general. In brief, the *Arequier* or *Arelltree*, and all the Trees which are called *Palmites*, have no Branches, but great, long and broad Leaves, like the Palm-tree; and they have their Leaves only at the top of the stalk, which is hollow. These sorts of Trees do annually produce a new Shoot of Leaves, which spring out of the middle of the Leaves of the preceeding year, which then fall off, and leave a mark round the Trunk; so that by these marks which are so many knots, and which are close together, they can easily compute the Years, or Age of the Tree.

This is what I had to say concerning the Extent and Fertility of the Kingdom of *Siam*, I will now discourse of the Manners of the *Siamese* in general; that is to say of their Habit, Houses, Furniture, Table, Equipage, Diversions and Affairs.

PART II.

Of the Manners of the Siamces in general.

CHAP. I.

Of the Habit and Meen of the Siamces.

They hardly cloath themselves. *Tacitus* reports concerning the *German* They wear
 Infantry in his time, that it was either all naked, or cover'd with light few Cloaths,
 Coats; and even at this present there are some Savages in the Nor- not so much
 thern *America*, which go almost naked; which proves, in my opinion, by reason of
 that the simplicity of Manners, as well as the Heat, is the cause of the Naked- the heat, as by
 nefs of the *Siamces*, as it is of the Nudity of these Savages. 'Tis not but that the simplicity
 Cloaths are almost insupportable to the *French* which arrive at *Siam*, and who of their Man-
 know not how to forbear acting and stirring; but it is unhealthful for them ners.
 to uncloath themselves, by reason that the Injuries of the excessively hot Air are
 not less dreadful, than those of the extremely cold Air to which one is not ac-
 custom'd; yet with this difference, that in very hot Climats 'tis sufficient for
 health, to cover the Stomach. The *Spaniards* do for this reason cover it with
 a Buffalo's Skin four double; but the *Siamces*, whose Manners are plain in eve-
 ry thing, have chosen to habituate themselves from their Infancy, to an almost
 entire Nudity.

They go with their Feet naked, and their Head bare; and for Decency only The *Pagne*,
 they begirt their Reins and Thighs down to their Knees with a piece of painted the Habit of
 Cloth about two Ells and an half long, which the *Portuguese* do call *Pagne*, from the *Siamces*.
 the Latin word *Pannus*; sometimes instead of a painted Cloth, the *Pagne*
 is a filken Stuff, either plain, or embroider'd with a border of Gold and
 Silver.

The *Mandarins*, or Officers, do wear besides the *Pagne*, a Muslin Shirt which A Muslin
 is as their Vest. They pluck it off, and wrap it about their middle, when they Shirt serves
 approach a *Mandarin* much higher than them in Dignity, to expres unto him them for a
 their readines to go where he shall please to send them. And yet the Officers Vest.
 whom we saw at the Audiences of the King of *Siam*, remain'd cloath'd there-
 with as with their Habit of Ceremony; and by the same reason they always
 had their Bonnets high, and pointed on the Head. These Shirts have no Neck-
 band, and are open before, they taking no care to fasten them, to cover their
 Stomach. The Sleeves hang down almost to their Wrists, being about two
 Foot wide, but without being plaited above or below. Moreover, the Body
 thereof is so strait, that not slipping nor falling down over the *Pagne*, it sets in
 several wrinkles.

In Winter they do sometimes put over their shoulders a breadth of Stuff or A Scarf a-
 painted Linnen, either like a Mantle or a Scarf; the ends of which they wind very gainst the
 neatly about their Arms. Cold.

But the King of *Siam* wears a Vest of some excellent Sattin brocaded, the How the
 Sleeves of which are very strait, and reach down to the Wrist; and as we ap- King wears
 parel our selves against the Cold under our Waistcoats, he puts this Vest under Vests of Silk
 the Shirt which I have described, and which he adorns with Lace, or European
 Point.

- Point. 'Tis not lawful for any *Siamese* to wear this sort of Vest, unless the King gives it him, and he makes this Present only to the most considerable of his Officers.
- A sort of Military Vest. He sometimes also gives them another Vest or Garment of Scarlet, which is to be worn only in War, or at Hunting. This Garment reaches to the Knees, and has eight or ten Buttons before. The Sleeves thereof are wide, but without Ornament, and so short, that they touch not the Elbows.
- The Red Colour for War and Hunting. 'Tis a general Custom at *Siam*, that the Prince, and all his Retinue, in the War or Hunting, be cloth'd in Red. Upon this account the Shirts which are given to the Soldiers, are of Muslin dy'd Red; and on the days of Ceremony, as was that of the Entry of the King's Ambassadors, these Red Shirts were given to the *Siamese*, which they put under their Arms.
- The high, and pointed Cap. The white, high, and pointed Cap, which we saw on the Ambassadors of *Siam*, is a Coif of Ceremony, whereof the King of *Siam* and his Officers do equally make use; but the King of *Siam's* Cap is adorn'd with a Circle, or a Crown of precious Stones, and those of his Officers are embellish'd with divers Circles of Gold, Silver, or Vermilion gilt, to distinguish their Dignities; or, have not any Ornament. The Officers wear them only before the King, or in their Tribunals, or in some Ceremony. They fasten them with a Stay under their Chin, and never pull them off to salute any person.
- Babouches. The *Mosors* have introduc'd amongst them the use of *Babouches* or *Slippers*, a kind of pointed Shoes without quarter or heel. They leave them at the Gates of their own and others Houses, to avoid dirtying the places where they enter. But, where-ever their King, or any other person is, to whom they owe Respect, (as is for instance a *Sacerat*, or Superior of their *Talapouts*) they appear not with Slippers.
- The Neateness of the Palace of *Siam*. Nothing is neater than the King of *Siam's* Palace, as well by reason of the few persons admitted therein, as of the Precautions with which they enter.
- Hats for Travelling. They esteem of Hats for Travelling, and this Prince causes them to be made of all Colours in almost the same shape with his Bonnet; but very few persons amongst the People vouchsafe to cover their Head against the heat of the Sun: and they do it but with a linnen Clout, and only when on the River, where the Reflexion most incommodes.
- The Habit of the Women. The difference of the Womens Habit from the Mens, is, that the Women fastning their *Pagne* length-wise round their Bodies, as likewise the Men do, they let it fall down broad-ways, and imitate a close Coat, which reaches down half-way their Leg; whereas the Men raise up their *Pagne* between their Thighs, by pulling through one of the ends, which they leave longer than the other, and which they tie to the Girdle behind, in which they do in some sort resemble our Breeches. The other end of the *Pagne* hangs before, and as they have no Pockets, they do frequently tye thereunto their Purse for the *Betel*, after the manner that we tye any thing in the corner of our Handkerchief. They do sometimes also wear two *Pagnes* one over the other, to the end that the uppermost may fit more near.
- A Nakedness almost entire. Excepting the *Pagne*, the Women go all naked, for they have no Muslin Shifts, only the Rich do constantly wear a Scarf. They do sometimes wrap the ends thereof about their Arms; but the best Air for them, is to put it singly over their Bosom at the middle, to make smooth the wrinkles thereof, and to let the two ends hang down behind over their Shoulders.
- Modesty in this Nakedness. Nevertheless so great a Nudity renders them not immodest. On the contrary, the Men and Women of this Country are the most scrupulous in the world of shewing the parts of their Body, which Custom obliges them to conceal. The Women who sit stooping in their *Balons* the day of the King's Ambassador's Entry, turn'd for the most part their Backs to the Show, and the most Curious hardly look'd over their Shoulder. 'Twas necessary to give the *French* Soldiers some *Pagnes* to wash in, to remove the Complaints which these People made, at seeing them go all naked into the River.

The Infants go there without a *Pagne* to four or five years of age, but when once of that age, they are never uncover'd to chastise them; and in the East it is an exceeding Infamy to be beaten naked on the parts of the Body, which are generally conceal'd.

'Tis from hence perhaps, that the use of the Cudgel sprang up amongst them in chastising, by reason that neither the Whip, nor the Rod, would be sufficiently felt through their Cloaths. Why they chastise with the Cudgel.

Moreover, they pluck not off their Cloaths to lie down, or at least they only change the *Pagne*, as they do to bathe themselves in the River. The Women bathe themselves like the Men, and do exercise themselves in swimming; and in no part of the world do they swim better. Modesty in the Bed, and also in the Bath.

Their Modesty renders the Custom of Bathing almost insupportable unto them, and few amongst them can resolve to do it. They have affixt Infamy to Nakedness: And they are no less careful about the Modesty of the Ears; than of the Eyes; seeing that impure and bawdy Songs are prohibited by the Laws of *Siam*, as well as by those of *China*. Yet I cannot affirm that they may not be us'd at all; for the Laws prohibit no other, than the Excess already too much establish'd: And from *China* there comes some Porcelaine Figures and Paintings so immodest, that they are no more permitted than the Bawdiest Songs. Other Proofs of their Modesty.

Those *Pagnes* that are of an extraordinary beauty and gaudiness, as those of Silk with Embroidery, or without Embroidery, and those of painted Linnen very fine, are permitted to those only to whom the Prince presents them. The Women of Quality do greatly esteem the black *Pagnes*, and their Scarf is frequently of plain white Mullin. What Pagnes are permitted.

They wear Rings on the three last Fingers of each Hand, and the Fashion permits them to put on as many as possibly can be kept on. They freely give half a Crown for Rings with false Stones, which at *Paris* cost not above two Sols. They have no Necklaces to adorn their Necks, nor their Wives; but the Women and Children of both Sexes wear Pendants. They are generally of Gold, Silver, or Vermilion gilt, in the shape of a Pear. The young Boys and Girls of a good Family have Bracelets, but only to fix or seven years of Age; and they equally wear them on their Arms and Legs. They are Rings of Gold, or Silver, or Vermilion gilt. Rings, Bracelets, Pendants.

As these People have their Body of another Colour than ours, it seems that our Eyes do not think them Naked, at least their Nakedness has nothing which surprized me; whereas a Naked White Man, when I met one, always appear'd a new Object unto me. Their Nakedness surprizeth not.

The *Siamese* are rather Small, than Great; but their Bodies are well proportion'd, which I principally attribute to their not swadling in their Infancy. The care that we take to form the shape of our Children, is not always so successful, as the liberty which they leave to Nature to proceed in forming theirs. 'Tis true, that the Breasts of the *Siamese* Women uphold not themselves from their Childhood, and hang down rather to their Navels; but otherwise, their Body is well proportioned, and their hanging Breasts offend not the Eyes of their Husbands: so true it is that the Phantasies, even they which seem to be most natural, do greatly consist in Custom. The Stature of the Siamese.

The shape of their Faces, as well of the Men as Women, participate less of the Oval, than the Lozenge; it is broad and high at the Cheek-bones, and on a sudden their Forehead contracts and terminates almost as much in a Point, as their Chin. Moreover, their Eyes slit a little upwards are small, and not over-brisk, and the white thereof is generally yellowish. Their Jaws are hollow, by reason they are too high above; their Mouths are large, their Lips thick and pale, and their Teeth blacken'd. Their Complexion is gross, and of a brown mix'd with red, unto which the continual Sun-burning contributes as much as the Birth. Their Mien.

The Women use neither Paint nor Patches; but I have seen a great Lord, whose Legs were blud'd with a dull Blue, like that mark which the Gunpowder leaves. They that shew'd me it, inform'd me that it was a thing affected by the

Great

Great Men, that they had more or less blue according to their dignity; and that the King of *Siam* was blu'd from the sole of his Feet, to the hollow of his Stomach. Others assur'd me that it was not out of Grandeur, but Superstition; and others would make me to doubt whether the King of *Siam* was blue. I know not how it is.

The Nose and Ears of the *Siamfes*.

The *Siamfes*, as I have said, have their Nose short and round at the end, and their Ears bigger than ours; and the larger they have them, the more they esteem them: A Phantasy common to all the East, as it appears by all the Statues of Porcelaine and other matter, which come from thence. But in this there is a difference amongst the Orientals; for some do stretch their Ears at the tip to lengthen them, without boring them any more than is necessary to put Pendants therein. Others, after having bor'd them, do by little and little enlarge the hole, to thrust in bigger and bigger Sticks: And it happens, especially in the Country of *Laos*, that they can almost thrust their Fift into the hole, and that the tip of the Ear touches the Shoulders. The *Siamfes* have Ears somewhat bigger than ours, but naturally and without Artifice.

Their Hair.

Their Hair is black, thick and lank, and both Sexes wear it so short, that all round the Head it reaches only to the top of the Ears. Underneath this they are very closely shaved, and this Fashion pleaseth them. The Women raise it on their Forehead, yet without fastning it again; and some, especially the *Peguins*, do let it grow behind, to wreath it. The young unmarried wear it after a particular manner. They cut with Scissars very close the Crown of the Head, and then all round they pull off a small Circle of Hair about the thickness of two Crown-pieces, and underneath they let the rest of their Hair grow down almost to their Shoulders. The *Spaniards*, by reason of the heat, do thus frequently shave the Crown of their Head, but they pluck off nothing.

The Fancy of the *Siamfes* for white Women.

Now every one being in love with the things of his own Country, I doubted not but the Pictures of some of the most beautiful persons of the Court, which I had brought into this Country, would ravish the *Siamfes* into admiration. The painting thereof was better than that of those little Pictures which are daily sent into Foreign Countries; yet it must be confess'd that the *Siamfes* hardly consider'd them, and that after the Pictures of the Royal Family, before which they respectively bowed themselves, not daring stedfastly to behold them, they exceedingly esteem'd that of the Duke of *Montausier*, by reason of his high and warlike Meen. We asked two young *Mandarins* what they thought of a great Puppet or Baby, that we shew'd them. One of them reply'd, that a Woman like this would be worth an hundred *Cattis*, or fifteen thousand *Livres*, and his Companion was of the same mind; but he added, that there was not any person at *Siam* that could purchase it. Whether they put so high a value on a white Woman, either for the singular delight which they take in them, or only by reason that whatever comes from far, ought to be very dear, I leave to be determin'd. 'Tis certain, that whether it be Fancy, or Grandeur, the King of *Siam* has some white *Mingrelion*, or *Georgian* Women, which he purchases in *Perfa*: And the *Siamfes* that had been in *France* acknowledg'd, that tho' they were not at first very much struck either with the whiteness, or with the features of the *French* Women, yet they presently apprehended that they alone were handfom, and that the *Siamfes* were not. As to the habit of the Puppet, the two *Mandarins* absolutely condemn'd it, as too intricate and troublesome for the Husband that would pull it off from his Wife: And I have since consider'd, that they imagin'd perhaps that our Wives lay in their Cloaths, like theirs, which would doubtless be very troublesome.

The *Siamfes* are very neat.

As the Cloaths imbibe whatever the Body transpires, it is certain that the less one is cloth'd, the more easie it is to be neat, as the *Siamfes* are. They perfume themselves in several places of their Body. On their Lips they put a sort of perfum'd Pomatum, which makes them appear much paler than naturally they are. They bathe themselves three or four times a day, or oftner, and it is one of their Neatnesses not to make a Visit of Consequence without bathing; and in this case they make a white spot on the top

top of their Breast with a piece of Chalk, to shew that they came from the Bath.

They bathe themselves two ways, either by going into the water after our fashion, or by causing water to be pour'd over their Body with Ladles; and they sometimes continue this sort of Bathing for an hour. In a word, they need not to warm the water for their Domestic Baths, no notwithstanding it has been kept several days, and in Winter; it always continues naturally hot.

Two ways of Bathing.

They take care of their Teeth, altho' they black them: they wash their Hair with Water and sweet Oils, as the *Spaniards* do, and they use no more Powder than they; but they comb themselves, which most of the *Spaniards* do not. They have Combs from *China*, which instead of being all of a piece like ours, are only a great many Points or Teeth tied close together with Wire. They pluck their Beard, and naturally have little; but they cut not their Nails, they are fatisfy'd to keep them neat.

The Neatness of their Teeth and Hair.

We saw some Dancers by Profession, who, for Beauty, had put on very long Copper Nails, which made them appear like Harpies. At *China*, at least before the Conquest of the *Tartars*, the Custom was neither to cut the Nails, nor the Hair, nor the Beard. The Men wore on their Heads a Net of Hair or Silk, which they fasten'd behind; and which not covering the top of the Head, left a space, through which they pull'd out their Hair, and then wreath'd and fasten'd it with a Bodkin. And it is said that this Dress on which they sometimes also wore Bonnets, or a kind of Hats, did cause Megrims, and other very violent pains in their Head.

An Affectation for long Nails.

CHAP. II.

Of the Houses of the Siamces, and of their Architecture in Publick Buildings.

IF the *Siamces* are plain in their Habits, they are not less in their Houses, in their Furniture, and in their Food: Rich in a general Poverty, because they know how to content themselves with a little. Their Houses are small, but surrounded with pretty large Grounds. Hurdles of cleft Bambou, oftentimes not close compacted, do make the Floors, Walls and Roofs thereof. The Piles, on which they are erected to avoid the Inundation, are Bambou's as thick as one's Leg, and about 3 Foot above the Ground, by reason that the Waters do sometimes rise as much as that. There never is more than four or six, on which they do lay other Bambou's across instead of Beams. The Stairs are a Ladder of Bambou, which hangs on the outside like the Ladder of a Windmill. And by reason that their Stables are also in the Air, they have Climbers made of Hurdles, by which the Cattle enter therein.

The *Siamces* keep the same Simplicity in every thing.

If every House stands single, 'tis rather for the privacy of the Family, which would be discover'd through such thin Walls, than for fear of Fire: For besides that, they make their little Fire in the Courts and not in the Houses, it is impossible for them in any case to consume any great matter. Three hundred Houses which were burnt at *Siam* in our time, were rebuilt in two days. On a time when a Boom was shot to please the King of *Siam*, who beheld it at a distance, and from one of the Windows of his Palace, it was necessary for this purpose to remove three Houses, and the Proprietors had taken and carry'd them away with their Furniture in less than an hour. Their Hearth or Chimney is a Basket full of Earth, and supported with three Sticks like a Tripode. And thus they place the Fires wherewith they enclose great spaces in the Forests for the hunting of the Elephants.

Houses soon built.

There are no Inns at *Siam*.

'Tis in Houses of this Nature, or rather in these sorts of Tents, but bigger, that they lodged us along the River. They had built them purposely for us, by reason there are not any wherein they could lodge us. There are no Inns at *Siam*, nor in any State of *Asia*. But in *Turkey*, *Persia*, and *Mogul* there are *Caravanseras*; for Travellers, that is to say public Buildings without Furniture, in which the *Caravans* may shelter themselves, and where every one eats and lies according to the Provisions and Conveniences which he carries thither. In the Road from *Siam* to *Louvo*, I saw a Hall for this use. 'Tis a space about the bigness of an ordinary Hall, enclosed with a Wall about, as high as one may easily lean over, and covered with a Roof, which is laid upon wooden Pillars set at equal distances in the wall. The King of *Siam* does sometimes dine there in his Travels, but as for particular persons, their Boats serve them for their Inn.

Hospitality why unknown amongst the People of *Asia*.

Hospitality is a Virtue unknown in *Asia*, which in my opinion proceeds from the care that every one takes to conceal his Wives. The *Siamese* practise it only as to the Beasts, which they freely succour in their Distresses: But the *Talapians* having no Wives, they are more hospitable than the People. At *Siam* was a French man who resolv'd to keep an Inn there: and some Europeans only did sometimes go thither. And although amongst the *Siamese*, as well as amongst the *Chinese*, it be an established practice to entertain one another, yet it is rarely in this Country, and with much Ceremony: and especially no open Table is there kept; so that it would be difficult to lay out much in keeping a Table, if one would.

What Houses were purposely built for the King's Ambassadors.

There being no house proper for us on the banks of the River, they built some after their Country fashion. Hurdles laid on Piles, and covered with Mats of Bulrush, did not only make the Floors, but the Area of the Courts. The Hall and Chambers were hung with painted Cloaths, with Cielings of white Muslin, the extremities of which hung sloping. The Floors were cover'd with Rushmats, finer and more shining than those of the Courts; and in the Chambers where the King's Ambassadors lay, Tapestry-carpets were laid over the Mats, Neatness appeared every where, but no Magnificence. At *Bamcoek*, *Siam*, and *Louvo*, where the Europeans, *Chinese*, and *Moor*s have built Houses of Brick, they lodged us in Houses of this sort, and not in Houses purposely built for us.

Brick-Houses for the Ambassadors of France and Portugal, which were not finished.

The Houses of the great Officers of *Siam*.

Yet we saw two Brick Houses which the King of *Siam* had built, one for the Ambassadors of France, and the other for those of Portugal, but they are not finished; by reason perhaps of the little probability there was, that they would be frequently inhabited. Moreover it is certain that this Prince begins several Brick buildings, and finishes few. The reason of which I know not.

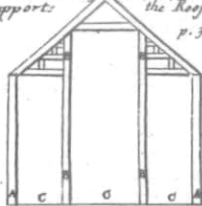
The great Officers of this Court have Timber Houses, which are said to be great Armories; but therein do lodge only the Master of the House, his Principal Wife, and their Children. Every one of the other Wives with her Children, every Slave with his Family, have all their little Apartments separate and alone, but yet inclosed within the same Inclosure of *Bamboo* with the Master's House; altho they be so many different Families.

Their Houses have but one Story.

One single story sufficeth them; and I am persuaded that this manner of building is more commodious to them than ours; seeing that they are not straitened for room (for there remains some in the City, and they take it where they please) and seeing they build with those slight materials, which every one takes at pleasure in the Woods, or which he buys at a low rate of him that has been there to take them. Nevertheless it is reported that the reason why their Houses have but one story, is that no Person may be higher in his own House than the King of *Siam*, when he passes thro the street mounted on his Elephant; and that further to assure themselves that they are all lower than this Prince when he goes either by Water or by Land, they must shut all their Windows, and come into the Street, or into their *Balons* to prostrate themselves. Thus they did on the day of the Entrance of the King's Ambassadors, less out of curiosity for the Show, than out of respect to his Majesties Letter: But it should seem that this custom of coming down out of their Houses, is a sufficient respect to their Prince. For it is not true, that the Houses erected, as they are on Piles,

The Timber work of the Temple which supports the Roof.

p. 31.

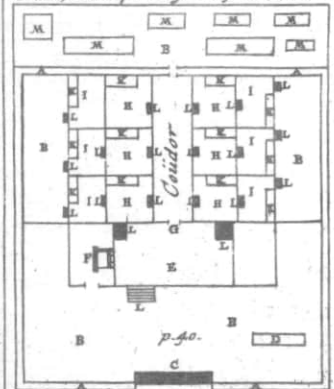


AA The Walls.
BB Piles of Wood
CCC Ground floor of the Temple
The Temple.



DD Stones called Sema.

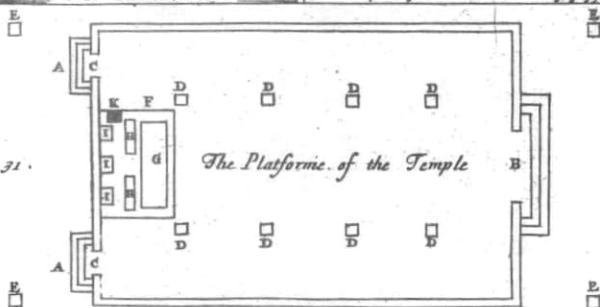
The King of Siam's Palace of Bamboum & Wood, the Rooms whereof have light only at the Doors.



p. 40.

AA Double Cloister of Bamboum. B The Windows of King's Chamber.
BB Courts of Bamboum set upon Piles. CC The Chambers of King's Chamber.
C The Gate. D The Hall. E The Hall of Audience.
F The Hall of Bamboum to go to L Stairs of Bamboum on the Elephant of Guard. G Kitchen & Lodgings of the

p. 31.



The Platform of the Temple

Pagaucurs

or Rowers.

p. 42.



Piles, are lower than the King on his Elephant; and it is less true, that they are not higher than the King in his *Balon*. But what they doubtless observe, is that their Houses are less exalted than the Palaces of this Prince. Moreover his Palaces consisting only of one story do sufficiently evince, that this is the Phantasm of the Country in their Buildings; the true reason of which I will give you in the sequel.

The *Europeans*, *Chineses*, and *Moors*, do there build with Brick, every one according to his Genius; for that they alone will be at the expence, as I conceive, or that they alone have the Liberty thereof, as it is reported. At the side of their Houses, to keep off the Sun and not hinder the Air, some do add Pent-houses, which are sometimes supported by Pillars. Others do make the bodies of the House double, which do reciprocally receive the light one from the other, to the end that the Air may pass from one to the other. The Chambers are large and full of Windows, to be the more fresh and airy. And those of the first story have lights over the lower Hall, which ought to be so called by reason of its height, and which sometimes is almost all enclosed with Buildings, through which it receives the light. And 'tis this they call *Divan*, an *Arabian* word which properly signifies a *Council-Chamber*, or *Judgement-Hall*.

There are other sorts of *Divans*, which being built on three sides do want a fourth Wall, on that side which the Sun shines least on, in the whole Course of the year, for between the Tropicks it illuminates every where according to the several Seasons. On the side which is open they do put a Pent-house, as high as the Roof: and the inside of the *Divan* is frequently adorn'd from the top to the bottom with little Niches contrived either in the Wall, or in the Wainscot, in which they put some *China* Dishes. We had a *Divan* of this last sort in our House at *Siam*, and in the Front under the Pent-house there played a little Fountain.

The Palaces of *Siam* and *Lowo*, and several Pagodes or Temples are likewise of Brick, but the Palaces are low, by reason they have no more than one story, as I have intimated; and the Pagodes are not raised high enough in proportion to their bigness. They are much darker than our Churches; perhaps because the Obscurity imprints more respect, and seems naturally to have something religious. Moreover they are of the shape of our Chappels, but without Vaults, or Ceilings; only the Timber-work which supports the Tiles, is varnished with red interpersed with some streaks of Gold.

The King of *China's* Palace is still of Wood; and this persuades me, that Brick-Buildings are very modern at *Siam*, and that the *Europeans* have there introduced the practice and use thereof. And because that the first *Europeans*, which have built in this Country, were *Factories*, and have called their Houses, *Factories*; the *Siamese*, from the word which in their language signifies *Factory*, do likewise name their ancientest Brick-Pagoda, as if they should say *Pagoda-Factory*, or *Pagoda* of the *Factory*.

In a word, they know no exterior Ornament for Palaces, nor for Temples, save in the Roofs, which they cover with that ordinary Tin which they call *Calin*, or with Tiles varnished with yellow, as it is in the King of *China's* Palace. But tho there appears not any Gold in the Palace of *Siam* on the outside, and there is but little gilding on the inside, yet they fail not to call it *Prasut-Tong*, or the Golden Palace, because they give pompous names to every thing which they honour. As for what concerns the five Orders of Architecture, composed of Columns, Architraves, Frizes, and other Ornaments, the *Siamese* have not any knowledge thereof; and it is not in Ornaments of Architecture, that amongst them consists the real Dignity of the Royal Houses and the Temples.

Their Stairs are so mean, that a pair of Stairs of ten or twelve steps, by which we went up into the Hall of Audience at *Siam*, exceeded not two foot in breadth. They were of Brick joyning to the Wall on the right side, and without any Rail on the left. But the *Siamese* Lords minded it not; they went up crawling on their Hands and Knees; and so softly, that they might have said that they would surprize the King their Master. The Gate of the Hall being square, but low and strait, was agreeable to the Stairs, and placed on the left

Hand

Hand at the Extremity or Corner of the Wall of the Hall. I know not whether they understand subtilty, and whether they do not believe that a very little Door is too big, seeing it is thought that they ought to prostrate themselves to enter therein. 'Tis true that the entrance into the Hall of *Louvo* is better, according to our Fancy; but besides that, the Palace of *Louvo* is more modern, the Prince does there lay aside his State, which resides principally in the Metropolis, as I shall relate in the sequel.

Wherein the dignity of Palaces consist.

That which amongst them makes the real dignity of the Houses, is that altho there is no more than one story, yet they are not all level. As for example, in the Palace, the King and Lady's Apartment is higher than the rest, and the nearer an Apartment is to it, the higher it is in respect to another, which is further distant: So that there is always some steps to ascend from one to the other: For they all joyn to one another, and the whole is from end to end on a line; and it is that which causes the inequality in the Roofs. The Roofs are all high-ridged, but the one is lower than the other; as it covers a part lower than another. And a lower Roof seems to come out from a higher Roof, and the highest to bear on the lowest, like a Saddle, the fore-bow of which bears on the hind-part of another.

The same at China.

In the King of *China's* Palace it is the same. And this inequality of the Roofs, which seems to proceed one from under another, after the manner that I have explain'd it, denotes grandeur, in that it supposes an inequality of parts, which is not found in these Countries, at least in considerable number, but at the King's Houses; to the end that the further one is permitted to go into this set of Buildings, the more indeed he ascends, and the greater distinction he perceives. The great Officers will have three parts, one higher than another, which are divided by three Roofs of different elevation: But at the Palace of the City of *Siam* I have seen seven Roofs proceeding one from under another before the Building: I know not whether there were not others behind. Some square Towers, which are in the Palace, do seem also to have several Roofs, one three, another five, another seven, as if they were square Goblets laid one upon another; and in one of these Towers is a very great Drum headed with an Elephants Skin, to beat the *Tocfin* or Alarm in case of need.

The same in the Temples or Pagodes.

As to the *Pagodes*, in those that I have seen, I observed only one single Pent-house before, and another behind. The highest Roof is that under which the Idol stands, the other two which are lower, are thought to be only for the People; although the People forbear not to enter every where on the days when the Temple is open.

Pyramids.

But the Principal Ornament of the *Pagodes*, is to be accompanied, as generally they are, with several *Pyramids* of Lime and Brick, the Ornaments of which are very grossly performed. The highest are as high as our ordinary Steeples, and the lowest not exceeding two Fathom. They are all round, and do little diminish in bigness as they rise; so that they terminate like a Dome: It is true that when they are very low, there proceeds from this Dome-like extremity a Tin Spire very small and sharp pointed, and high enough in relation to the rest of the Pyramid. Some there are which diminish and grow thick again four or five times in their height, so that the Profile of them goes waving: But these Belyings out are smaller as they are in a higher part of the Pyramid. They are adorn'd in three or four places of their Contour, with several Furrows or Flutings at Right Angles, as well as in that they have some hollow, as in that they have some raised, which diminishing gradually in proportion to the Diminution of the Pyramid, do run terminating in a point at the beginning of the next belying out, from whence do again arise new Flutings.

A Description of certain Halls of the Palace.

I cannot tell what the King of *Siam's* Apartments are; I have only seen the first piece thereof, which is the Hall of Audience at *Siam* and *Louvo*. 'Tis said that no person enters further, not the King's Domesticks themselves, excepting his Wives and Eunuch; in which, if it is true, this Prince maintains a greater height than the King of *China*. I likewise saw the Council-chamber in the Palace of *Louvo*; but it was also a first Room of another Pile of Building, I mean that it was not preceded by any Anti-Chamber. At the Front and two sides

sides of this Hall lies a Terrace, which commands as well over the Garden which environs it, as it is commanded by the Hall; and it is on this Terrace, and under a Canopy, purposely erected on the North-side, that the King's Ambassadors were at a private Audience, which the King of Siam gave them; and this Prince was in a Chair of State at one of the Hall Windows. In the middle of the Garden and in the Courts there are some single open Rooms, which are called Halls; I mean those square places, that I have already described, which inclosed with a Wall, no higher than one may lean over, and cover'd with a Roof, which bears only upon Pillars placed at equal distances in the Wall. These Halls are for the chief *Mandarins*, who do there sit cross-legg'd, either for the Functions of their Offices, or to make their Court, or to expect the Prince's Orders, viz. in the Morning very late, and in the Evening until the approach of the Night, and they stir not thence without Order. The less considerable *Mandarins* sit in the open Air, in the Courts or Gardens; and when they know by certain signals that the King of Siam sees them, altho he be invisible, they do all prostrate themselves on their Hands and Knees.

When we din'd in the Palace of Siam, 'twas in a very pleasant place under great Trees, and at the side of a store-pond, wherein it was said that amongst several sorts of Fish there are some which resemble a Man and Woman; but I saw none of any sort. In the Palace of *Louvo* we din'd in the Garden, in a single Hall, the Walls of which supported the Roof. They are plaistered with a Cement extremely white, smooth, and shining, upon occasion of which it was told us there was much better made at *Surat*. The Hall has a Door at each end, and is encompass'd with a Ditch between two or three Fathoms in breadth, and perhaps one in depth, in which there are twenty little *jet-deaux*, at equal distances. They play like a watering pot, pierced with several very little holes, and they spout no higher than the edge of the Ditch, or thereabouts, because that instead of raising the Water, they have dug away the Earth to make the Basins low.

The places of the Palace where we dined.

The Garden is not very spacious: the Compartments and Borders thereof are very little and formed by Bricks laid edgewise. The Paths between the Borders cannot contain two a breast, nor the Walks more: But the whole being planted with Flowers, and several sorts of Palmites and other Trees, the Garden, Hall, and Fountains, had I know not what Air of Simplicity and Coolness, which caus'd Delight. 'Tis a remarkable thing that these Princes should never be inclined to use Magnificence in their Gardens; altho from all Antiquity the Orientals have admir'd them.

The Garden of Louvo.

The King of Siam exercising the Chace sometimes for several days, there are in the Woods some Palaces of Bambou, or if you please, some fixed Tents, which only need furnishing to receive him. They are red on the outside, like those of the great *Mogul*, when he goes into the Country, and like the Walls which serve as an Inclosure for the King of China's Palace. I have given the Model thereof, not only that the Simplicity of it may be seen, but principally because some assur'd me that the King of Siam's Apartments, in his Palaces of Siam and Louvo is according to the same Model. 'Tis only a little Dormitory, where the King and his Wives have each a little Cell: Nevertheless the truth of what few persons do see, is always hard to know. However some also assur'd me concerning this Prince, what I have heard reported of *Cromwel*, which is that for fear of being surprized by any Conspiracy, this Prince hath several Apartments wherein he locks himself at night, it being impossible to divine exactly in which he lies. *Strabo* reports of the Indian Kings in his time, that this very reason oblig'd them to change their Bed and Apartment several times in the same Night. And this is almost all that can be spoken concerning the manner of Building amongst the *Siamois*. Their Furniture is as follows:

Palaces of Bambou in the Woods.

C H A P. III.

Of the Furniture of the Siameſes.

Their groſs
Houſehold-
ſtuff.

THeir Bedſtead is a wooden Frame very ſtrait and matted, but without Head or Poſts. It has ſometimes fix Feet, which are not joined by croſs pieces, ſometimes it has none at all; but the generality have no other Bed than a Matt of Bulruſh. Their Table is like a Drum-head with the Edges raiſed, and without Feet. They have at Table neither Cloth nor Napkin, nor Spoon, nor Fork, nor Knife, they are ſerv'd with Morſels ready cut. No Seats, but Bulruſh Matts, finer or courſer: No Carpets, when the Prince gives them not to them: And thoſe of fine Cloth are very honourable, by reaſon of the deareneſs thereof. The Rich have Cuſhions to lean on, but they uſe them not to fit on, not the King himſelf. That which amongſt us is of Stuff or Wooll, or Silk, is generally amongſt them of white or painted Cotton.

Their Veſſels.

Their Veſſels are either of Porcelane, or Potters Clay, with ſome Veſſels of Copper. Wood plain, or varniſh'd, *Coco* and *Bambou* afford them all the reſt. If they have any Veſſel of Gold or Silver, 'tis very little, and almoſt only by the Liberality of the Prince, and as a Chattel belonging to their Offices. Their Buckets to draw up Water are of *Bambou*, very neatly woven. In the Markets the People are ſeen to boil their *Rice* in a *Coco*, and the *Rice* to be ſufficiently dreſt, before the *Coco* begins to burn; but the *Coco* ſerves no more than once.

Their Tools.

In ſhort, every one builds his Houſe, if he cauſeth it not to be built by his Slaves; and for this Reaſon the Saw and the Plane are every ones Tools. At the end of this Volume the moſt Curious will find a Liſt, which two *Mandarins* gave me of the ordinary Moveables in their Families. 'Tis not that every particular perſon has ſo many, but perhaps none has more. They do there add the names of the principal parts of a Houſe, of their Habits, and of their Arms. There may be ſeen the plain, but neat manner after which they built, and furniſh'd themſelves with Moveables; and ſeveral particulars of their Manners, which I there relate upon the occaſion of certain Moveables.

The King's
Furniture.

Their King's Furniture is almoſt the ſame, but richer and more precious than thoſe of particular perſons. The Halls, which I ſaw at the Palaces of *Siam* and *Louvo*, are all Wainſcoted, and the Wainſcot is varniſh'd Red, with ſome ſtreaks and foliages of Gold. The Floors were cover'd with Carpets. The Hall of Audience at *Louvo* was all over embelliſh'd with Looking-glaſſes, which the King's Squadron had brought to *Siam*. The Council-Chamber was furniſh'd after this manner. In the Room there was a Sopha made exactly like a great Bedſtead with its Poſts, its Bottom and its Curtain-Rods all cover'd with a Plate of Gold, and the bottom with a Carpet, but without Teſter or Curtains, or any ſort of Garniture; inſtead of the Bolſter there were Cuſhions pil'd, on which the King lean'd, but ſat not thereon, as I have already remark'd, he had only a Carpet under him. In this Hall, at the Wall of the right ſide in relation to the Sopha, there was an excellent Glaſs which the King had ſent to the King of *Siam* by *M. de Chaumont*. There was likewiſe a wooden Chair of State gilded, in which this Prince ſhew'd himſelf to the King's Ambaſſadors at a private Audience, which I have mention'd; and a *Tiab* or Cap to put *Beteſ* in, about two Foot high, or thereabouts, and caſ'd with Silver curiouſly wrought, and gilded in ſome places.

The Table-
Plate which
we ſaw at the
King's Palace.

In all the Entertainments which we receiv'd at the Palace, we ſaw great ſtore of Silver Plate, eſpecially great Baſons round and deep, with a Brim about a Finger's breadth, in which were ſerv'd up great round Boxes about a Foot and an half in Diameter. They were cover'd, and had a Foot proportion'd to their bigneſs, and 'twas in theſe Boxes that the *Rice* was ſerv'd up. For the Fruit they gave us ſome gold Plates, which were reported to have been made purpoſely for the

the Entertainments which the King of *Siam* made for *M. de Chaumont*; and it is true that this Prince eats not in flat Plate. They esteem for his Dignity, that the Messes which are serv'd up to him are only in high Vessels, and Porcelaine is more common at his Table, than Gold or Silver: A general Custom in all the Courts of *Asia*, and even in that of *Constantinople*.

C H A P. IV.

Concerning the Table of the Siameses.

THE Table of the *Siameses* is not sumptuous: As we eat less in Summer than in Winter, they eat less than we, by reason of the continual Summer in which they live; their common Food is Rice and Fish. The Sea affords them very delicate small Oysters, very excellent small Turtles, Lobsters of all sizes, and admirable Fish, the sorts of which are unknown to us. Their River is also very plentiful of Fish, and principally very good and curious Eels: But they make little esteem of fresh Fish.

That the *Siameses* eat little, and what their Food is.

Amongst the Fresh-water Fish, they have some little ones of two sorts, which do here deserve to be mention'd. They call them *Pla out*, and *Pla cad*, that is to say the Fish out, and the Fish cad. To free me from all doubts, some have assur'd me, that after they have salted them together, as the *Siameses* us'd to do, if they leave them in an earthen Pot in their Pickle, where they soon corrupt, by reason they salt ill at *Siam*, then, that is to say when they are corrupted, and as it were in a very liquid Paste, they do exactly follow the flux and reflux of the Sea, growing higher and lower in the Pitcher as the Sea ebbs or flows. Mr. Vincent gave me a Pot thereof at his arrival in *France*, and assur'd me that this Experiment was true, and that he had seen it; but I cannot add my Testimony thereunto, by reason I was too late advertis'd thereof at *Siam*, to have an occasion of ascertaining it by my own Eyes; and that the Pot which Mr. Vincent gave me, and which I brought to *Paris*, perform'd this Effect no more: perhaps because the Fish were too much corrupted, or that their virtue of imitating the flux and reflux of the Sea continues only a certain time.

A Wonder reported of two sorts of Fish.

The *Siameses* find much difficulty to make good Salt, by reason that Meats do hardly take Salt in excessive hot Countries; but they love Fish ill season'd and dry better than fresh, even stinking Fish displeaseth them not no more than rotten Eggs, Locusts, Rats, Lizards, and most Insects: Nature doubtless framing their Appetite to things, the Digestion whereof is more easie to them. And it may be that all these things have not such an ill taste as we imagine. *Nauvorette* in Pag. 45. Tom. I. of his *Historical Discourses of China*, relates that he at first exceedingly detested the Brooded Eggs of a Bird which he calls *Taban*, but that when he eat thereof, he found them excellent. 'Tis certain that at *Siam* new-laid Eggs are very unwholesome; we do here eat Vipers, we draw not certain Birds to eat them; and sometimes Venison a little over-hunted is best relisht.

Bad Sale at *Siam*: The desire of the *Siameses* for corrupt meats.

Whatever finells ill, is not always ill tasted.

A *Siamese* makes a very good Meal with a pound of *Rice* a day, which amounts not to more than a Farthing; and with a little dry or salt Fish, which costs no more. The *Arak* or *Rice Brandy* is not worth above two Sols for that quantity, which amounts to a *Parisian* Pint; after which it is no wonder if the *Siameses* are not in any great care about their Subsistence, and if in the Evening there is heard nothing but Singing in their Houses.

What a *Siamese* spends a day in Food.

Their Sauces are plain, a little Water with some Spices, Garlic, Chibols, or some sweet Herb, as Baulm. They do very much esteem a liquid Sauce, like Mustard, which is only Cray Fish corrupted, because they are ill salted; they call it *Capi*. They gave Mr. *Ceheret* some Pots thereof, which had no bad Smell.

Their Sauces:

That

They yellow
their Chil-
dren.

That which serves them instead of Saffron is a root, which has the Taste and Colour thereof when it is dry and reduc'd to Powder: the Plant thereof is known under the Name of *Crocus Indicus*. They account it very wholesome for their Children, to yellow the Body and Face therewith. So that in the streets there are only seen Children with a tawny Complexion.

What Oil
they eat.

They have neither Nuts, nor Olives, nor any eating Oil, save that which they extract from the Fruit of *Coco*; which, tho' always a little bitter, yet is good, when it is fresh drawn: but it presently becomes very strong, inasmuch that it is not eatable by such as are not accustomed to eat bad Oil. The Taste is always made, and it happened at my return from a very long Voyage, where I met with no extraordinary Oil, that I found the excellent Oil of *Paris* insipid and tasteless.

How Rela-
tions must be
understood
with reference
to him that
writes them.

Wherefore I cannot forbear making a remark very necessary, truly to understand the Relations of Foreign Countries. 'Tis that the words, good, excellent, magnificent, great, bad, ugly, simple, and small; equivocal in themselves, must always be understood with reference to the Phantasia of the Author of the Relation, if otherwise he does not particularly explain what he writes. As for example, if a *Dutch* Factor, or a *Portuguese* Monk do exaggerate the Magnificence, and good Entertainment of the East; if the least House of the King of *China's* Palace appears unto them worthy of an *European* King, it must be supposed that this is true, in reference to the Court of *Portugal*. And yet some may doubt hereof, seeing that in truth the Apartments of the Palace of *China*, are no other than Wood varnished on the inside and outside, which is rather agreeable and neat than magnificent. Thus (because it would not be just to condemn every thing, that resembles not what we do now see in the Court of *France*, and which was never seen before this great and glorious Reign) I have endeavour'd to express nothing in ambiguous Terms, but to describe exactly what I have seen, thereby to prevent the surprizing any person by my particular Fancy, and to the end that every one make as true a Judgment of what I write, as if he had performed the Voyage that I have done.

Another Re-
flection on the
same Subject.

Another defect in Relations is the Translation of the Foreign Words. As for instance, amongst the King of *China's* Wives, there is only one that hath the Honours and Title of Queen: the rest are under her, although they be all legitimate, that is to say permitted by the Laws of the Country. They are called *verbatim* the Ladies of the Palace, and at *Siam* they have the same Name. The Children of these Ladies honour not their natural Mothers, as the *Chinese* are obliged theirs, but they render this Respect, and give the Name of Mother to the Queen; as if the second Wives bore Children only for the principal Wife. And this is also the Custom at *China*, in the Houses of private Persons, who have several Wives; to the end that there may be an entire subordination, which maintains Peace there as much as possible. And that the Children be not permitted to dispute amongst them the merit of their Mothers. We read almost the same thing of *Sarah*, who gave *Hagar* her Bond-maid unto *Abraham*, to have, as he said, some Children by her Slave, being past Child-bearing her self. Some other Wives of the Patriarchs practis'd the same, and it is evident that being the principal Wives, every one was thought the Mother of all her Husband's Children. But to return to what I have spoken concerning the danger of being deceived by the Translations of the Foreign words in Relations, who sees not the Equivocation of these words, the Ladies of the Palace, put into the mouth of a *Chinese*, or *Portuguese*, or in the mouth of a *Frenchman*, who translates a *Portuguese* Relation of *China*? The same Equivocations are found in the names of Offices? Because that all Courts and all Governments do not resemble. All Functions are not found every where, and the same are not every where attributed to the same Offices, that is to say to Offices of the same name: besides that such a Function will be great and considerable in one Country, which may be inconsiderable in another. As for example, the *Spaniards* have Marshals, which they at first design'd in imitation of the Marshals of *France*, and yet an Ambassador would find himself exceedingly mistaken, if being accompanied to the Audience of the King of *Spain*, by a Marshal of *Spain*, he should think him-
self

self as highly honoured, as if he were accompany'd to the King's Audience by a Marhal of *France*. Now the more remote the Courts are, the greater is the defect, when the same Words and the same *Ideas* are transferred from the one to the other. At *Siam* it is a very honourable Employment to empty the King's Close-stool, which is always emptied in a place appointed, and carefully kept for this purpose; it may be out of some superstitious Fear of the Sorceries which they imagine may be perform'd on the Excrements. At *China* all the Splendor and Authority is in the Offices which we call the Long Robe: And their Military Officers, at least before the Domination of the *Tartars*, consisted only of unfortunate Wretches, who were not thought endow'd with Merit sufficient to raise themselves by Learning.

A third defect of Relations is to describe things only in one Particular, if I may so say. The Reader conceives that in every thing else the Nation whereof he is inform'd resembles his, and that in this only it is either extravagant or admirable. Thus if it be simply said, that the King of *Siam* puts his Shirt over his Vest, this would appear ridiculous to us; but when the whole is understood, it is found, that, tho' all Nations act almost on different Principles, the whole amounts almost to the same; and that there is not in any place any thing marvellous or extravagant. But enough is spoken on this Subject, I return to the good Cheer of the *Siamese*.

They have Milk from the Female *Buffalo*, which has more Cream, than the Milk of our Cows; but they make not any sort of Cheese, and scarce any Butter. Butter does hardly take any Consistence there by reason of the Heat; and that which is brought from *Suratt* and *Bengale*, through Climates so extremely hot, is very bad, and almost melted in arriving there.

They disguise dry Fish after several manners, without varying the Preparation. For Example, they will cut it into thin Slices, twist'd like the *Vermicelli* of the *Italians*, or the *confis filée* of the *Spaniards*. The *Chinese* are so addicted to this way of disguising their Meats, that of a Drake, for Example, they will make a Soldier, of an *Ananas* a Dragon, and this Dragon shall be painted in several Colours. Heretofore in *Europe* several Sugar Figures were serv'd up amongst the Fruit, but they eat them not; and the *Germans* call'd them *Schaw-essen*, or Food to look upon.

Of more than thirty Dishes, wherewith we were served at *Siam* after the Fashion of the *Chinese*, it was not possible for me to eat of one: Altho' it be naturally as easie to me as to any other, to accommodate my self to strange Tastes. At the sight therefore of so strange a Repast, I rested more satisfy'd with what some report of the *Chinese*, that they taste, without loathing, the Excrements of Men and other Animals, to chuse out the most proper to manure and improve their Lands; and that they commonly eat of all the Viands, which we abhor, as Cats, Dogs, Horses, Asles, Mules, &c.

In which they are very opposite to the *Siamese*, who do rarely eat of any Flesh, tho' it be given them. But when they vouchsafe so far as to eat thereof, they rather chuse the Guts, and whatever is most loathsome to us in the Intestines. In their Bazzars or Markets they do sell Insects broil'd or roasted, and they have not any other Roast-meat. The King of *Siam* gave us some Poultry, and other live Animals, for our Servants to kill and dress for our Table. But in general all Food there is tough, Juiceless and Crude; and by degrees the *Europeans* themselves, which inhabit at *Siam*, do refrain eating thereof. The ancient Inhabitants of the Isle of *Rhodes*, according to *Albian*, esteem'd not those who preferred Flesh before Fish. The *Spaniards* and *Italians* do eat little, and do eat it dry roasted; and we find that the *English* eat too much, and that they eat it too raw: 'Tis that as the Countries are hotter, Sobriety is more natural.

The *Siamese* take no care of Poultry. They have two sorts of Hens, some are like to ours, others have the Skin and Comb black, but the Flesh and Bones

Another Reflection on the same Subject.

The Milk at Siam.

How the Siamese disguise their Meats.

A Chinese Repast.

The Siamese do love Flesh little, and have no Butchers Meat.

The Poultry.

Bones white; and when these black Hens are boil'd, it is impossible to distinguish them from the white ones either by the taste or colour; altho' there are some persons who generally esteem the black best. Ducks are very plentiful and very good, but 'tis a Food, which, as it is said, does easily cloy. The *Indian Cock* are brought to us from the *West-Indies*, and there are none at *Siam*.

Game.

Peacocks and Pigeons are wild there; all Partridges are gray. Hares are very scarce, and no Rabbits to be seen. It may be that the Race could not preserve itself in the Woods, amongst all the carnivorous Animals, wherewith they are stored. There is great plenty of *Francolins*, and excellent Snipes; here they do eat Turtle-doves, whose Plumage is variegated, Parrots, and divers small Birds, which are good.

Wild-Fowl.

But Wild Fowl is secure amongst the *Siameses*; they love neither to kill them, nor hinder their liberty. They hate the Dogs that will take them; and moreover, the height of their Herbage, and the thickness of the Woods do render the Chase difficult; yet the *Moors* do exceedingly divert themselves in the flight of *Faulcons*, and these Birds do come to them from *Persia*.

The Peculiarity of the Birds of *Siam*.

A thing which will appear singular, (altho' it be common at *Brasils*, and it may be in other hot Countries) is, that almost all the Birds at *Siam* are beautiful to behold, and are all very unpleasant to hear. There are several sorts, which imitate the Voice; all have some Cry, but no warbling Note. And tho' in this Country there are some of the Birds which we have here, they are, for Example, neither Nightingales nor Canary-Birds, but Sparrows, Peacocks, Crows, and Vultures. The Sparrows do enter boldly into the Chambers, there to pick up the little Insects, wherewith they swarm. The Crows and Vultures are very plentiful, and very familiar; because no person frights them, and the people feed them out of Charity. They do generally give them the Children, which die before three or four years old.

What we call Butcher's Meat, is worth nothing at *Siam*.

The goodness of the Pig.

Goats and Sheep are here very scarce, small, and not over-good; they are to be bought only of the *Moors*: the King of *Siam* caused a quantity of them to be nourished for himself. They generally keep the Ox and *Buffalo* for Tillage, and sell the Cows, and the whole is very bad to eat.

The price of Meats.

The Pig is there very small, and so fat, that it is distasteful; yet the flesh thereof is the wholesomest that can be eaten in most of the Countries of the Torrid Zone, and is given to sick persons. The Pigs are excellent also on the Sea, when they eat Bisket; whereas the Sheep do frequently taste of the wooll, by reason they eat it one from another, as Poultry eats their feathers.

Volatiles do multiply exceedingly at *Siam*.

As to the price of Meats in the Kingdom of *Siam*, a Cow is not worth above ten Sols in the Provinces; and a Crown, or thereabouts, in the Metropolis: A Sheep four Crowns: A Goat two or three Crowns, (tho' the *Moors* do sell them very unwillingly, because this is their principal Food:) A Pig is not worth above seven Sols, by reason the *Moors* eat not thereof; Hens are worth about twenty pence a dozen, and a dozen of Ducks is worth a Crown.

The Disasters of the *Siameses*.

All Volatiles do multiply extremely at *Siam*; the heat of the Climate almost hatches the Eggs. Venison also is not wanting, notwithstanding the spoil which the wild Beasts make thereof, if the *Siameses* were greedy of Dainties: But when they kill Bucks, and other Beasts, it is only to sell the Skins thereof to the *Dutch*, who make a great Trade thereof to *Japan*.

Yet to the discredit, in my opinion, of Sobriety, or because that in proportion to the heat of their Stomach, the *Siameses* are not more sober than us, they live not longer, and their Life is not less attack'd with Diseases than ours. Amongst the most dangerous, the most frequent are Fluxes and Dysenteries, from which the *Europeans* that arrive at this Country, have more trouble to defend themselves, than the Natives of the Country, by reason they cannot live sober enough. The *Siameses* are sometimes attack'd with burning Fevers, in which the transport to the Brain is easily formed, with defluxions on the Stomach. Moreover, Inflammations are rare, and the ordinary continual Fever kills none, no more than in the other places of the Torrid Zone: Intermitting Fevers are also rare, but violent, tho' the cold Fit be very short. The External does so exceedingly

ceedingly weaken the Natural Heat, that here are not seen almost any of those Distempers, which our Physicians do call Agues¹ and this is so throughout *India*, and also in *Persia*, where, of an hundred sick persons, Mr. Vincent the provincial Physician, whom I have already mention'd, declar'd that he scarce found one which had the Fever, or any other hot distemper. Coughs, Coqueluchies or Quinancies, and all sorts of Defluxions and Rheumatisms are not less frequent at *Siam*, than in these Countries; and I wonder not thereat, seeing that the weather is inclined to Rain so great a part of the year: but the Gout, Epilepsy, Apoplexy, Pthysick, and all sorts of Cholick, especially the Stone, are very rare.

There are a great many *Cankers*, *Abscesses*, and *Fistula's*. *Frefpeli* are here so frequent, that among twenty men, nineteen are infected therewith; and some have two thirds of their body cover'd therewith. There is no Scurvy, nor Dropsie, but a great many of those extraordinary distempers, which the people conceive to be caused by Witchcraft. The ill consequences of a debauch are here very frequent, but they know not whether they are ancient or modern in their Country.

In a word, there are some contagious diseases, but the real Plague of this Country is the Small Pox: It oftentimes makes dreadful ravage, and then they intert the bodies without burning them: but because their Piety always makes them desire to render them this last respect, they do afterwards dig them up again: and that which exceedingly surprizes me, is, that they dare not do it till three years after, or longer, by reason, as they say, that they have experimented, that this Contagion breaks out afresh, if they dig them up sooner.

What is the Plague at Siam.

CHAP. V.

Concerning the Carriages and Equipage of the Siameses, in general.

BESIDES the *Ox* and *Buffalo*, which they commonly ride, the Elephant is their sole Domestic Animal. The Hunting of Elephants is free for all, but sick Animals they pursue this Chase only to catch them, and never to kill them. They never cut them, but for ordinary service they use only the Female Elephants: the Males they design for the War. Their Country is not proper for the breeding of Horses, or they know not how to breed them: but I believe also that their Pastures are too coarse and moorish, to give Courage and Mettle to their Horses; and this is the reason that they need not to cut them to render them more tractable. They have neither Asses nor Mules; but the *Moores* which are settled at *Siam*, have some Camels, which come to them from abroad.

The King of *Siam* only keeps about two thousand Horses: He has a dozen of *Persian*, which are now nothing worth. The *Persian* Ambassador presented them to him about four or five years since, from the King his Master. Ordinarily he sends to buy some Horses at *Batavia*, where they are all small and very brisk, but as resty as the *Javan* people are mutinous; either for that the Country makes them so, or that the *Hollanders* know not to manage them.

I have more than once seen in the streets of *Batavia* the Burgeses of the City on Horseback, but in an instant their Ranks were broken, by reason that most of their Horses would stop on a sudden, and would refuse to march: and mine Host hereupon inform'd me, that the common fault of the *Javan* Horses was to prove very resty. The *Dutch* Company maintain Infantry at *Batavia*, amongst which there is a good number of *French*. As for what concerns the Cavalry, there is no other than the Burgeses, who notwithstanding the heat of the Climate, do cloath themselves with good Buff, with rich trappings embroider'd with Gold and Silver. No Burgher serves in the Infantry: but if a Souldier demonstrates

Their domestic Animals.

The King of Siam's Horses.

The Cavalry and Infantry of Batavia.

strates that he has wherewith to settle and maintain himself at *Batavia*, either by a Marriage or a Trade, they never refuse him neither his liberty, nor his right of Burghership.

The King of Siam rides little or not at all on Horseback. When we arriv'd there were two *Siameses* to buy two hundred Horses for the King their Master, about an hundred and fifty of which they had already sent away for *Siam*. 'Tis not that this Prince loves to ride on Horseback; this way seems to him both too mean and of too little defence: for the Elephant appears to them much more proper for Battel, though when all comes to all, it may reasonably be doubted whether he be more proper for War, as I shall show in the sequel. They report that this Animal knows how to defend his Master, and to set him upon his back again with his Trunk, if he is slain, and to throw his Enemy on the ground. When the King of *Siam* seiz'd on the Crown, the King his Uncle fled from the Palace on an Elephant, and not on Horseback, altho a Horse seems much properer to fly.

A Guard Elephant in the Palace. In the Palace there is always an Elephant on the Guard, that is to say Harneſſed and ready to mount, and no Guard-Horse. Yet some have assur'd me, that the King of *Siam* disdains not absolutely to ride on Horseback, but that he does it very rarely.

The King of Siam never seen on Foot. In this place of the Palace where the Guard-Elephant stands, there is a little Scaffold, to which the King walks from his Apartment, and from this Scaffold he easily gets upon his Elephant. But if he would be carry'd in a Chair by men, which he sometimes is, he comes to this sort of carriage, at the due height of placing himself therein, either by a Window or a Terrace, and by this means neither his Subjects nor Strangers do ever see him on Foot. This Honour is only reserved for his Wives and Eunuchs, when he is lock'd up within his Palace.

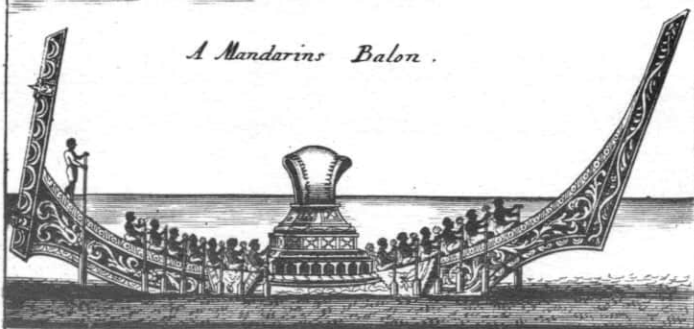
Their Sedans. Their Chairs or Sedans are not like ours, they are square and flat Seats, more or less elevated, which they place and fix on Biers. Four or eight men (for the Dignity herein consists in the Number) do carry them on their naked Shoulders, one or two to each Staff, and other men relieve them. Sometimes these Seats have a Back and Arms like our Chairs of State, and sometimes they are simply compact, except before, with a small Ballister about half a Foot high; but the *Siameses* do always place themselves cross-legged. Sometimes these Seats are open, sometimes they have an Imperial; and these Imperials are of several sorts, which I will describe in speaking of the Balons, in the middle of which they do likewise place these Seats, as well as on the backs of Elephants.

The Imperial not very honourable at Siam, but the Parade is. As often as I have seen the King of *Siam* on an Elephant, his Seat was without an Imperial, and all open before. At the sides and behind do rise up to the top of his Shoulders three great Foliages, or Feathers gilt, and bent outwards at the Point: but when this Prince stops, a Footman, who stands ten or twelve paces from him, shelters him from the Sun with a very high Umbrella like a Pike, with the Head three or four Foot in Diameter: and this is not a small fatigue, when the Wind blows thereon. This sort of Umbrella, which is only for the King, is called *Pat-boouk*.

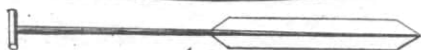
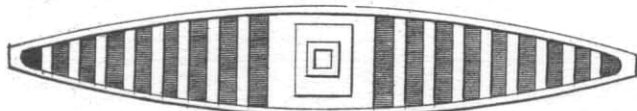
How they get upon an Elephant. To return to the riding of the Elephant, those that would guide him themselves do seat themselves on his Neck, as on a Horse, but without any kind of Saddle; and with a punch of Iron or Silver they prick him on the head, sometimes on the right side, sometimes on the left, or exactly in the middle of the Forehead, telling him at the same time whether he must go, and when he must stop; and on the Road in the descents of the ways they advise him to go descending, *Pat, Pat*, that is to say, descend, descend. But if one will not take the pains to guide him, he places himself on his back in a Chair, instead of a Saddle, or without a Chair and on his Hair, if we may so speak of an Animal that has none: And then a Servant, or commonly he that takes care of feeding the Elephant, gets up on his Neck and guides him; and sometimes there is also another man seated on the Crupper. The *Siameses* do call him that is placed on the Crupper *Hona-sip*, or the Chief of *Ten*, because that they suppose out of Pride, that an Elephant has a great number of men to serve him, and that there are ten under the command of the *Hona-sip*. Him that sits upon the Elephants

Neck

A Mandarin Balon .



The Body of a Balon with its Benches for y^e Pagayeurs or Rowers and the Alcove to fix the Mandarin's seat .

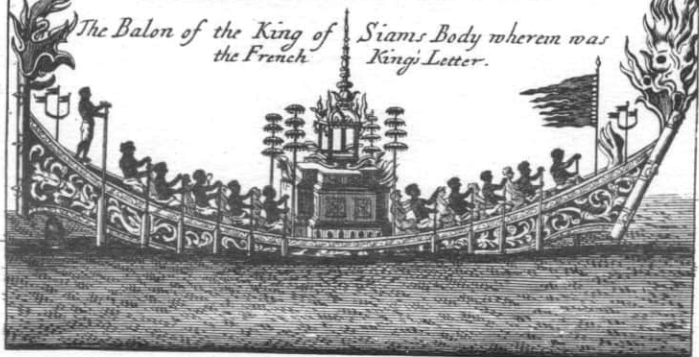


A Pagaye or Oar

The Balon of the Kings Envoys .



The Balon of the King of Siam's Body wherein was the French King's Letter.



Neck they do call *Nai-Tchang*, or Captain of the Elephant; and he commands over all those that are appointed for the service of the Elephant.

But because that in this Country they go more by Water than by Land, the King of Siam has very fine *Balons*. I have already said that the Body of a *Balon* is compos'd only of one single Tree, sometimes from sixteen to twenty Fathom in length. Two men sitting cross-leg'd by the side one of another, on a Plank laid across, are sufficient to take up the whole breadth thereof. The one *Pagaye* at the right, and the other on the left side. *Pagaye* is to row with the *Pagaye*, and the *Pagaye* is a short Oar, which one holds with both hands, by the middle, and at the end. It seems that he can only sweep the water though with force. It is not fixed to the edge of the *Balon*, and he that manages it, looks where he goes; whereas he that rows, turns his back to his Road.

In a single *Balon* there are sometimes an hundred, or an hundred and twenty *Pagayeurs*, thus ranged two and two with their Legs crossed on Planks: but the inferior Officers have *Balons* a great deal shorter, where few *Pagayeurs* or *Oars*, as sixteen, or twenty do suffice. The *Pagayeurs* or Rowers, do strike the *Pagaye* in Confort, do sing, or make some measured Noises; and they plunge the *Pagaye* in a just cadence with a motion of the Arms and Shoulders, which is vigorous, but easy, and graceful. The weight of this Bank of Oars serves as Ballast to the *Balon*, and keeps it almost even with the water, which is the reason that the *Pagayeurs* are very short. And the Impression which the *Balon* receives from so many men which vigorously plunge the *Pagaye* at the same time, makes it always totter with a motion which pleases the Eye, and which is observ'd much more at the Poop and Prow; because they are higher, and like to the Neck and Tail of some Dragon, or some monstrous Fish, of which the *Pagayeurs* on either side shew like the Wings or the Fins. At the Prow one single *Pagayeur* takes up the first Rank, without having any Comrade at his side. He has not room enough to cross his left Leg with his right, and he is forced to stretch it out over an end of a stick, which proceeds from the side of the Prow. 'Tis this first *Pagayeur* that gives the motion to all the rest. His *Pagaye* is somewhat longer, by reason that he is posted in that place where the Prow begins to rise, and that he is so much the further from the Water. He plunges the *Pagaye* once to every measure, and when it is necessary to go swifter he plunges it twice; and lifting up the *Pagaye* continually, and only for decency with a shout, he throws the water a great way, and the next stroke all the Equipage imitates him. The Pilot stands always at the Poop, where it rises exceedingly. The Rudder is a very long *Pagaye*, which is not fixed to the *Balon*, and to which the Steersman seems to give no other Motion, than to keep it truly perpendicular in the water, and against the edge of the *Balon* sometimes on the right side, and sometimes on the left. The Women Slaves do row the Ladies *Balons*.

In the *Balons* of ordinary service, wherein there are fewer *Pagayeurs*, there is in the middle a Cabin of *Bambous*, or other Wood, without Painting or Varnish, in which a whole Family may be held, and sometimes this Cabin has a lower Pent-house before, under which the Slaves are; and many of the *Siamese* have no other Habitation. But in the *Balons* of Ceremony, or in those of the King of Siam's body, which the Portuguese have called *Balons* of State, there is in the middle but one Seat, which takes up almost the whole breadth of the *Balon*, and wherein there is only one Person and his Arms, the Sabre and Lance. If it is an ordinary Mandarin, he has only a single Umbrella like ours to shelter himself; if it is a more considerable Mandarin, besides that his Seat is higher, he is covered with what the Portuguese call *Chirole*, and the *Siamese* *Coup*. 'Tis an Arbor all open before and behind, made of *Bambous* cleft and interlac'd, and cover'd within and without with a black or red Varnish. The red Varnish is for the Mandarins at the right hand, the black for those of the left, a distinction which I shall explain in its due place. Besides this the extremities of the *Chirole* are gilded on the outside the breadth of three or four Inches, and some pretend that 'tis in the fashion of these gildings, which are not plain, but like Embroidery, that the Marks of the Mandarins Dignity are. There are also some *Chiroles* cover'd with Stuff, but they serve not for rainy weather. He that commands

the Equipage sometimes cudgels, but very rarely, those which row softly and out of measure, places himself cross-leg'd before the *Mandarin* Seat, on the extremity of the Table, on which the Seat is fixed. But if the King chances to pass by, the *Mandarin* himself descends upon this Table, and there prostrates himself; his whole Equipage does likewise follow his example, and his *Balou* stirs not till the King's be out of sight.

The *Balons* of the Body which are called *Balons* of State.

The Imperials of the *Balons* of State are all over gilded, as well as the *Pageys*: They are supported by Columns, and loaded with several pieces of Sculpture in *Pyramids*, and some have sheds against the Sun. In the *Balon* where the King's Person is, there are four Captains or Officers to command the Equipage, two before and two behind they sit cross-leg'd; and this is the Ornament of the *Balons*.

The Swift-ness of the *Balons*.

Now as these Vessels are very narrow, and very proper to cut the water, and the Equipage thereof numerous, it cannot be imagin'd with what swiftness it carries them, even against the Stream, and how pleasant a sight it is to behold a great number of *Balons* to row together in good order.

The Entrance of the Kings Ambassadors into the River.

I confess that when the King's Ambassadors entered in the River, the Beauty of the Show surpriz'd me. The River is of an agreeable breadth, and notwithstanding its *Meanders*, there is always discover'd a very great extent of its Channel, the Banks whereof are two Hedge-rows continually green. This would be the best Theater in the World for the most sumptuous and magnificent Feasts: but no Magnificence appears like a great number of men devoted to serve you. There were near three Thousand embark'd in seventy or eighty *Balons*, which made the Train of the Ambassador. They rowed in two ranks, and left the *Balon* with the King's Ambassadors in the middle. Every one was animated and in motion: All eyes were taken up with the diversity and number of the *Balons*, and with the pleasantness of the River's Channel; and yet the ears were diverted by a barbarous, but agreeable noise of Songs, Acclamations and Instruments; in the intervals of which the Imagination ceased not to have a sensible taste of the natural silence of the River. In the night there was another sort of Beauty, by reason that every *Balon* had its Lanthorn; and that a noise which pleases, is much more pleasant in the night.

The ancient Magnificence of the Court of Siam.

'Tis asserted at *Siam* that the Court was formerly very magnificent, that is to say, there was a great number of Lords adorn'd with rich Stuffs, and a great many precious Stones; and always attended with an hundred or two hundred Slaves, and with a considerable number of Elephants: but this is gone ever since the Father of the present King cut off almost all the most considerable, and consequently the most formidable *Siamese*, as well those who had served him in his Revolt, as those which had opposed him. At present three or four Lords only have permission to use those Chairs or Sedans, which I have spoken of. The *Palankin* (which is a kind of Bed, that hangs almost to the ground, from a great Bar, which men carry on their Shoulders) is permitted to sick persons, and some diseased old men, for 'tis a Carriage wherein they can only lie along. But though the *Siamese* may not freely use these sorts of Conveniences, the *Europeans* which are at *Siam*, have more permission herein.

Umbrella's.

The use of *Umbrella's*, in *Siamese* Rooms, is also a Favour which the King of *Siam* grants not to all his Subjects, although the *Umbrella* be permitted to all the *Europeans*. Those which are like to ours, that is to say, which have but one round, is the least honorable, and most of the *Mandarins* have thereof. Those that have more rounds about the same handle, as if they were several *Umbrella's* fix'd one upon another, are for the King alone. Those which the *Siamese* do call *Clot*, which only have one round, but from which do hang two or three painted Cloaths like so many Hangings, one lower than the other, are those which the King of *Siam* gives to the *Sancrats* or Superiors of the *Talapois*. Those which he gave to the King's Ambassadors were of this last sort, and with three Cloaths. You may see the figure thereof in that of the *Balons* of the King's Ambassadors.

The *Umbrella* of the *Talapois*, and the Origine of the word *Talapoin*.

The *Talapois* have *Umbrella's* in the form of a Screen, which they carry in their hand. They are of a kind of Palmito leaf cut round and folded, and the folds thereof are tyed with a thread near the stem, and the stem which they make

make crooked like an S is the handle thereof. In *Siamefe* they call them *Talapat*, and 'tis probable that from hence comes the name of *Talapo* or *Talapoin*, which is in use amongst Foreigners only, and which is unknown to the *Talapoins* themselves, whose *Siamefe* name is *Tchaou-con*.

The Elephant is the carriage of every one that can take one by hunting, or purchase one; but the Boat is the more universal carriage: no person can travel without one, by reason of the annual Inundation of the Country.

Whilst the King of *Siam* is in his Metropolis, the ancient custom of his Court requires that he show himself to the people five or six days of the year only, and that he does it with Pomp. Heretofore the Kings his Predecessors did first break up the ground every year, till they left this Function to the *Oc-ya-kaou*; and it was attended with great Splendor. They also went out another day to perform on the water another Ceremony, which was not less superstitious, nor less splendid. 'Twas to conjure the River to return into its Channel, when the Agriculture requir'd it, and when the Wind inclining to the North assured the return of fair weather. The present King was the first that dispenc'd with this troublesome work, and it is several years since it seem'd abolished; because, say they, that the last time he perform'd it, he had the disgrace of being surpriz'd with rain, altho his Astrologers had promised him a fair day.

Ferdinand Mendez Pinto, relates that in his time the King of *Siam* used to shew himself one day in a year upon his white Elephant, to ride through nine streets of the City, and to extend great Liberalities to the People. This Ceremony, if it has been in use, is now abolished. The King of *Siam* never mounts the white Elephant, and the reason which they give is, that the white Elephant is as great a Lord as himself, because he has a King's soul like him. Thus this Prince shews himself in his Metropolis no more than twice a year, at the beginning of the sixth and twelfth month, to go and present Alms of Silver, yellow *Pagner*, and fruits to the *Talapoins* of the Principal Pagods. On these days, which the *Siamefes* do call *Pan pra*, a holy, or excellent day, he goes upon an Elephant to the Pagodes which are in the same City, and by water to another, which is about two leagues from the City down the River. On the days following he sends the like Alms to the less considerable Pagods: but this extends not above two leagues from the Metropolis, or thereabouts. And in the last month of the year 1687, this Prince went no where in person; he contented himself with sending every where.

If therefore the King of *Siam* shews himself in his Metropolis, 'tis upon some Ceremonies of Religion. At *Louvo*, where it is permitted him to lay aside his Kingship, he frequently goes abroad, either for the hunting of the Tyger and Elephant, or to stir himself; he goes with so little Pomp, that when he marches from *Louvo* to his little house of *Thlee-poussane* with his Ladies, he gives not any carriage to the women which are of the Company: which is doubtless a respect from these women Slaves to their Mistresses.

Nevertheless he has always in his retinue two or three hundred men as well on foot as on horseback; but what is this in comparison of those Trains of fifteen and twenty thousand men which the Relations do give him on days of Ceremony? Before him do march some Footmen with Staves, or with long Truncks to shoot Peas with, to drive all the People out of his way, and especially when the Ladies follow him; and likewise before he goes out the *Europeans* are therewith acquainted, if there are any lately arrived, to avoid meeting him: As for all the *Africans*, they very well know this custom, which is the same in all the Courts of *Afia*. *Barros* reports, that in the true *India*, when a Nobleman walks in the Streets he is always preceded by one of his Domesticks, who cries *po, po*, that is to say, close, close, to the end that all the Ploughmen may disperse themselves. *Oforin* reports, that 'tis the Ploughman that is obliged to cry out, and he subjoins, that it is for fear lest any Nobleman should touch him unawares, and revenge this Affront by killing him. The *Neirats* I call Nobles, who alone make profession of Arms, and who think themselves defiled, when they touch a Ploughman. At *Siam* and *China* the principal Magistrates have Officers that go before them, who make the People to stand in Ranks, and who would cudgel those that would not retire, or which would

The Elephant and Boat permitted to all.

When and how the King of *Siam* shews himself.

The King of *Siam* lives with less pomp at *Louvo* than at *Sam*.

The King of *Siam's* Retinue.

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not render to their Master all the other respects which are due unto him, and which in these Countries we found very insupportable. 'Tis no wonder therefore if the King of *China*, the Great *Mogul*, the King of *Persia*, and the other *Asiatick* Potentates have thought it consistent with their Dignity, thus to advertise the People of their March. Those that do for this purpose precede the King of *Siam*, are called *Conlaban* and *Coeng*. The *Conlaban*s do keep the right hand, and the *Coeng*'s the left: and we shall see in the List of certain Officers, that *Coeng* is the Title of the Provost. 'Tis upon the same account, that is to say, to disperse the People from the person of the King of *Siam*, when he travels, that two Officers of his Horse Guard, of *Men* and *Laor*, do march on both sides, but about 50 or 60 paces from him. His Courtizans appear first at the Rendezvous, or they do sometimes follow on Foot with their hands join'd on their Breast. Sometimes they follow on Horseback, sometimes on Elephants, but in this case their Elephants have no Chairs. The Foot and Horse-Guards do likewise follow, but confusedly and without any order; and if this Prince stops, all that follow him on Foot, prostrate themselves on their Knees and Elbows; and those that follow on Horseback, or on Elephants, do entirely bow down themselves on these Animals. Those which are named *Schaou mou*, do also follow a Foot: They are the King's Domesticks, which are not Slaves. Some do carry his Arms, and others his Boxes with *Betel* and *A-rek*.

The singular Respect of the *Siamers* for their King.

When this Prince gave to the King's Ambassadors the diversion of taking an Elephant, twelve Lords cloth'd in Scarlet, and with their red Caps, arrived before the King at the place of the Show, and seated themselves cross-leg'd on the ground before the place, where the King their Master was to stand. They were turn'd toward the place of the Show; but so soon as they heard the Noise of this Prince's March, they prostrated themselves on their Knees and Elbows towards the place from whence the sound came, and as the Noise approached they turned themselves by little and little towards the Noise, and still remained prostrate: So that when the King their Master was come they were prostrate before him, and their back was turned to the Show; and whilst the Show continued they made not any motion, and express'd not any sign of Curiosity. But my Discourse insensibly leads me to speak of the Shows and other Diversions of the *Siamers*,

CHAP. VI.

Concerning the Shows, and other Diversions of the *Siamers*.

The way of catching a wild Elephant.

THE place, where the Elephant is that they would take, is as it were a very broad and very long Trench: I say, as it were a Trench, because it is not made by digging, but by raising the Earth almost perpendicular on each side, and it is upon these Terrasses that the Spectators stand. In the bottom, which is between these Terrasses, is a double row of Trunks of Trees above ten Foot high, planted in the Earth, big enough to resist the Attacks of the Elephant, and far enough from one another to let a Man pass between, but too close to let an Elephant pass through. 'Tis between these two rows of Trunks, that the tame Female Elephants, which they had led into the Woods, had enticed a wild Male Elephant. Those which guide them thither, do cover themselves with Leaves, to avoid frightening the Elephants of the Woods, and the Female Elephants have understanding enough, to make the Cries proper to call the Males. He was already intrap'd in the double row of Trunks, by following the Females, and could no more return into the Woods; but the design was to take him and tie him, to shut him up and tame him. The Egrets from the space wherein he was, is a strait *Cortina*, composed also of great Trunks of Trees.

Trees. So soon as the Elephant is enter'd into this Cortine, the Gate through which he enters, and which he opens by thrusting it before him with his *Proboscis*, shuts again with its own weight: the other Gate through which he must pass is shut; and besides the space is so narrow, that he cannot turn himself therein. The difficulty was to engage the wild Elephant in this Cortine, and to engage him single; for the Females were still with him in the Trench, and he did not separate from them. Several *Siameses* who stood behind the Pallisado's of the Trunks, and the Foot of the Terrasses, where the Elephant could not come at them, enter'd every where between the Trunks into the space, where the Elephant was, to vex him; and when the Elephant pursued one of them, he fled very swiftly behind the Pallisado's, between which the enraged Elephant vainly thrust his *Proboscis*, and against which he broke the end of one of his Teeth. Whilst he thus pursued after those which provoked him, others laid long Nooses for him. One of the ends of which they kept; and they threw them at him with so much dexterity, that the Elephant in running never fail'd to put one of his hind-feet therein: so that by diligently putting the end of the Noose, they clos'd and fasten'd it a little above the Elephant's foot. These Nooses were of great Ropes, one of the ends of which was put into the other like a Slip-knot, and the Elephant dragged three or four of them at each hind-foot. For as soon as the Noose is once knit, he lets go the end thereof, to avoid being drag'd himself by the Elephant. The more he is exasperated, the less he associates with the Females; and yet to make them quit this space, a Man mounted on another Female enter'd therein, and went back again several times through the Cortine, and this Female which he mounted, called the others, by a dry blow, which she struck against the ground with her *Proboscis*. She darted it perpendicularly downwards, yet avoiding to strike altogether with the end, which she kept bended upwards. And when she had repeated this Call twice or thrice, he that rid her, made her to return back again through the Cortine. In fine, after he had perform'd this Trick five or six times with this Female, the other Female follow'd her, and soon after the Elephant return'd to himself, because they forbore to vex him, resolv'd to go after them. He push'd open the first door of the Cortine with his *Proboscis*, and so soon as he was enter'd, they threw several Buckets of water on his Body to refresh him; and with an incredible swiftness and dexterity they ty'd him to the Trunks of the Cortine with the Nooses, which were already at his feet. Then they made a tame Elephant to enter backwards into the Cortine, to whose Neck they also ty'd the savage Elephant by the Neck, and at the same time unloos'd him from the Trunks; and two other tame Elephants being likewise led to the Succor, all the three, the one on one side, the other on the other, and the third behind, do conduct the wild Elephant under a Pent-house near adjoining, where they fasten and tie him close by the Neck to a Pivot planted upright, which he made to turn as he turn'd round. They said that he need remain at this Pivot but 24 hours, and that in this space of time they would lead some tame Elephants to him to keep him company, and comfort him: that after 24 hours they would carry him into the Stable appointed for him; and that in eight days he would bethink himself, and submit to Slavery.

They speak of an Elephant as of a Man; they believe him perfectly rational, and they relate such rational things of him, that he only wants Speech. This is one, for Example, to which you may give what Credit you please. Some have related to us for a known Truth, that a Man having crack'd a *Coco* on the head of an Elephant which he rode, and using for this purpose the back of that kind of Punch, with which I have said that they guide the Elephants, this Elephant took up a resolution of revenging himself as soon as he could. He gather'd up with his *Proboscis*, as they say, one of the Shells of the *Coco*, and kept it several days, never letting it go but to eat, during which he kept it carefully between his two fore-feet. In fine, he that had affronted him, approaching him to give him food, the Elephant seiz'd him, trampled him under his feet, and slew him, and for his Justification laid the *Coco*-Shell on the dead Body. 'Tis in these terms that the Relation was made to us: for the *Siameses* do think that

What the *Siameses* do think of the Elephants.

Elephants are capable of Justice, and of profiting by the punishments one of another; and they alledge that in War, for Instance, when these Animals mutiny, it is needful only to kill one on the spot, to render all the others wise. But these Relations, and several others, which I have forgot, do seem very fabulous; and not to digress from the Example, which I have mentioned, it is, in my opinion, very evident, that if the offended Elephant had consulted reason, he would not have waited another opportunity of revenge, but would have wreak'd his vengeance on the spot; seeing that every Elephant can with his *Proboscis* throw off the Rider, and having thrown him on the ground, trample him under foot, and kill him.

How the *Siam*eser took leave of the three Elephants, which the King of *Siam* sent into *France*.

As for my self, during the time I was at *Siam*, I saw no marvellous Act perform'd by any of these Animals, tho' I am perswaded that they are more docile than others. They embarked three young ones, which the King of *Siam* sent to the three Princes the Grandsons of *France*. The *Siam*eser which brought them on Board our Ships to embark them, took leave of them, as they would have done of three of their Companions, and whisper'd them in their Ears, saying, Go, depart cheerfully, you will be Slaves indeed, but you will be so to three the greatest Princes of the World, whose Service is as moderate as it is glorious. They afterwards hoisted them into the Ships, and because they bow'd down themselves to go under the Decks, they cry'd out with admiration, as if all Animals did not as much to pass under low places.

The Elephant is very dangerous when he is enraged.

One day at *Louvo* an Elephant tore in pieces in the Street the Brother of a young *Mandarin*, who was with the King's Ambassadors, as Mr. *Torp* had been with the Ambassadors of *Siam*. They said indeed that the Elephant was enraged, but this Rage was not of a Beast more reasonable, but only more cruel than the rest. Thus to render the Elephants of War more tame, they are accompany'd with Females, when they are led out to water and wash themselves, and I know not whether without this Train it could ever be accomplish'd. The *Siam*eser report, that the Elephants are sensible of Grandeur; that they love to have a great House, that is to say, several Grooms for their service, and some Females for their Mistresses, (with whom nevertheless it is said that the Elephants desire familiarity only in the Woods, so long as they are savage, and at full liberty:) that without this state, they afflict themselves at the little regard had for them; and that when they commit any great Fault, the severest punishment that can be inflicted on them, is to retrench their House, to take away their Females, to remove them from the Palace, and to send them into Stables abroad. They say that an Elephant having been punish'd after this manner, and being set at liberty, returns to his Lodge at the Palace, and kills the Elephant which was put in his place; which seems neither incredible nor strange, provided the way be free and open: for every Animal loves his usual Lodging, and according as he is more or less Courageous, he will use more or less Violence to drive out another Animal.

A Fight of Elephants.

To return to the Diversions of the Court of *Siam*, we saw a Fight of two Elephants of War. They were retained by the hind-feet with Cables, which several *Siam*eser held, and which besides this were fasten'd to Captains. The Elephants could hardly cross their Trunks in the Fight, two Men were mounted on each of them to animate them; but after five or six Attacks the Combat ended, and they brought in the Females, who parted them. At the great *Mogul's* Palace, the Elephants are permitted to approach nearer, and these Animals endeavor to beat off each other's Rider, and frequently they knock him down and kill him. At *Siam* they neither expose the Life of Men nor Beasts, by way of Sport or Exercise.

Cock-fighting.

They love Cock-Fighting. The most Courageous are not always the biggest, but those which are naturally the best armed, that is to say, those which have the best Spurs. If a Cock falls, they give him drink; by reason that they experimentally know that it is oftentimes only an effect of Thirst, and indeed he generally renews the Fight after quenching his Thirst. But as it almost always cost the life of one of the Cocks, the King of *Siam* prohibited these sort of Duels; because the *Talapins* cry'd, and said, That the Owners of the Cocks would for

for their punishment be bastinado'd in the other World with Bars of Iron. I forbore going to a Fight of an Elephant and a Tyger, because the King of Siam would not be there, and that I knew they would not permit to these Animals the liberty of using all their Courage. Some inform'd me that the Tyger had been very Cowardly, and that the Show had succeeded ill. The hunting of Elephants perform'd by an enclosure of Fires in the Woods, has been described by others: the King of Siam went not to that which was perform'd whilst the King's Ambassadors were at his Court, neither were they invited; but the other Diversions which were exhibited to them all at once, and in a vast Court, were these.

The one was a Chinese Comedy, which I would willingly have seen to the A Chinese end, but it was adjourned, after some Scenes, to go to Dinner. The Chinese Comedy. Comedians, whom the Siamese do love without understanding them, do speak in the Throat. All their words are Monosyllables, and I heard them not pronounce one single one, but with a new breath: some would say that it throttles them. Their Habit was such as the Relations of China describe it, almost like that of the Carthusians, being clasp'd on the side by three or four Buckles, which reach from the Arm-pit to the Hip, with great square Placards before and behind, whereon were painted Dragons, and with a Girdle three Fingers broad; on which, at equal distances, were little squares, and small rounds either of Tortoise-Shell or Horn, or of some sort of Wood: And these Girdles being loose, they were run into a Buckle on each side to sustain them. One of the Actors who represented a Magistrate, walk'd so gravely, that he first trod upon his Heel, and then successively and slowly upon the Sole and Toes; and as he rested on the Sole, he rais'd the Heel; and when he rested on his Toes, the Sole touch'd the ground no more. On the contrary, another Actor, walking like a Madman, threw his Feet and Arms in several extravagant Postures, and after a threatening manner, but much more excessive, than the whole Action of our Captains or Matamores. He was the General of an Army; and if the Relations of China are true, this Actor naturally represented the Affectations common to the Soldiers of his Country. The Theater had a Cloth on the bottom, and nothing on the sides, like the Stages of our Rope-dancers and Jack-puddings.

The Puppets are mute at Siam, and those which come from the Country of Puppets. Laos are much more esteemed than the Siamese. Neither the one nor the other have any thing, which is not very common in this Country.

But the Siamese Tumblers are excellent, and the Court of Siam gives the diversion thereof to the King, when he arrives at Louvo. Ailian reports, that Alexander had some Indian Rope-dancers at his Wedding, and that they were esteem'd more nimble than those of other Nations. These are their Actions, which it is necessary to confess I did not closely and carefully consider, because I was more attentive to the Chinese Comedy, than to all the other Shows, which were at the same time exhibited to us. They plant a Bamboo in the ground, and to the end of this they join another, and to the end of this second a third, and to the end of the third a Hoop: so that this makes as it were the wood of a round Racket, the Handle of which would be very long. A Man holding the two sides of the Hoop with his two Hands, puts his Head upon the inferior and inward part of the Hoop, raises his Body and his Feet on high, and continues in this posture an hour, and sometimes an hour and half: then he will put a Foot where he had plac'd his Head, and without standing otherwise, and without fixing the other Foot, he will dance after their manner, that is to say, without raising himself, but only by making Contortions: And what renders all this more perilous and difficult, is the continual wavering of the Bamboo. A Bamboo dancer of this sort, they call Lot Bouang; Lot signifies to pass, and Bouang a Hoop.

There dyed one, some Years since, who leap'd from the Hoop, supporting himself only by two Umbrella's, the hands of which were firmly fix'd to his Girdle: the Wind carry'd him accidentally sometimes to the Ground, sometimes on Trees or Houfes, and sometimes into the River. He so exceedingly diverted the King of Siam.

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the King of *Siam*, that this Prince had made him a great Lord: he had lodged him in the Palace, and had given him a great Title; or, as they say, a great Name. Others do walk and dance, after the mode of the Country, without raising themselves; but with Contortions on a Copper-wire as big as the little Finger, and stretch'd after the same manner as our Rope-dancers do stretch their Rope: And they say, that the more the Wire is stretched, the more difficult it is to stand, by reason it gives a greater spring, and is so much the more uncertain. But what they account most difficult, is to get upon this Wire by the part of that same Wire which is fasten'd to the ground, and to descend thence by one of the *Bambou's*, which are plac'd like a *St. Andrew's Cross* to support it: as also to sit on the Wire cross-leg'd, to hold there one of those Bands, which serves them as a Table to eat on it, and to raise themselves on their Feet. They cease not likewise to ascend and dance upon an extended Rope, but without a Counterpoise, and with *Babouches*, or Slippers on their Feet, and with *Sabres*, and Buckets of water fasten'd to their Legs. There are such who plant a very high Ladder in the ground, the two sides of which are of *Bambou's*, and the steps of *Sabres*, the edges of which are turned upwards. He goes to the top of this Ladder, and stands, and dances without any support on the edge of the *Sabre*, which makes the last step thereof; whilst the Ladder has more motion than a Tree shaken by the wind: then he descends Head foremost, and passes nimbly, winding between all the *Sabres*. I saw him descend, but observed not when he was on the highest *Sabre*; and I went not to examine whether the Steps were *Sabres*: not reckoning that the *Sabres* could be kept, except perhaps the lowest, because they are most expos'd to view. I omit the rest of this matter, as little important, and because I have not sufficiently observ'd it to support it with my Testimony.

Tame Serpents.

The Emperor *Galba* being in his Prætorship, exhibited to the *Roman* People the fight of some Elephants dancing upon Ropes. The Elephants of *Siam* are not so experienc'd, and the only Animals that I know the *Siamese* instruct, are great Serpents, which, they say, are very dangerous. These Animals do move themselves at the sound of the Instruments, as if they would dance. But this passes for Magic, because that always in that Country, as oftentimes, in this, those who have some extraordinary Artifices, do pretend that it consists in some mysterious words.

Religious Shows: An Illumination on the Waters, and another on the Land, and in the Palace.

The *Siamese* have also some Religious Shows. When the Waters begin to retreat, the People returns them Thanks for several Nights together with a great Illumination; not only for that they are retired, but for the Fertility which they render to the Lands. The whole River is then seen cover'd with floating Lanthorns, which pass with it. There are of different Sizes, according to the Devotion of every particular Person; the variously painted Paper, whereof they are made, augments the agreeable effect of so many Lights. Moreover, to thank the Earth for the Harvest, they do on the first days of their Year make another magnificent Illumination. The first time we arriv'd at *Louvo* was in the Night, and at the time of this Illumination; and we saw the Walls of the City adorn'd with lighted Lanthorns at equal distances; but the inside of the Palace was much more pleasant to behold. In the Walls which do make the Inclosures of the Courts, there were contriv'd three rows of small Niches all round, in every of which burnt a Lamp. The Windows and Doors were likewise all adorn'd with several Fires, and several great and small Lanthorns, of different Figures, garnish'd with Paper, or Canvas, and differently painted, were hung up with an agreeable Symmetry on the Branches of Trees, or on Posts.

Excellent Artificial Fire-works.

I saw no Fire-works, in which nevertheless the *Chinese* of *Siam* do excel, and they made some very curious during our residence at *Siam* and *Louvo*. At *China* there is also made a solemn Illumination at the beginning of their Year, and at another time another great Festival on the Water without any Illumination. The *Chinese* agree not in the Reasons they give thereof, but they give none upon the account of Religion, and those which they give are puerile and fabulous.

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We must not omit the Paper-Kite, in *Siamese Vao*, the Amusement of all the Courts of the *Indies* in Winter. I know not whether it be a piece of Religion, or not; but the great *Mogul*, who is a Mahometan, and not an Idolater, delights himself also therein. Sometimes they fasten Fire thereunto, which in the Air appears like a Planet. And sometimes they do there put a piece of Gold, which is for him that finds the Kite, in case the String breaks, or that the Kite falls so far distant, that it cannot be drawn back again. That of the King of *Siam* is in the Air every Night for the two Winter-months, and some *Mandarins* are nominated to ease one another in holding the String.

^{A Paper-Kite.}

The *Siameses* have three sorts of Stage-Plays. That which they call *Cone* is a Figure-dance, to the Sound of the Violin, and some other Instruments. The Dancers are maiked and armed, and represent rather a Combat than a Dance: And tho' every one runs into high Motions, and extravagant Postures, they cease not continually to intermix some word. Most of their Masks are hideous, and represent either monstrous Beasts, or kinds of Devils. The Show which they call *Lacone*, is a Poem intermixt with Epic and Dramatic, which lasts three days, from eight in the Morning till seven at Night. They are Histories in Verse, serious, and sung by several Actors always present, and which do only sing reciprocally. One of them sings the Historian's part, and the rest those of the Personages which the History makes to speak; but they are all Men that sing, and no Women. The *Rabam* is a double Dance of Men and Women, which is not Martial, but Gallant; and they presented unto us the Diversion thereof with the others, which I have before mentioned. These Dancers, both Men and Women, have all false Nails, and very long ones, of Copper: They sing some words in their dancing, and they can perform it without much tiring themselves, because their way of dancing is a simple march round, very slow, and without any high motion; but with a great many flow Contortions of the Body and Arms, so they hold not one another. Mean while two Men entertain the Spectators with several Fooleries, which the one utters in the name of all the Men-dancers, and the other in the name of all the Women-dancers. All these Actors have nothing singular in their Habits: only those that dance in the *Rabam*, and *Cone*, have gilded Paper-Bonnets, high and pointed, like the *Mandarins* Caps of Ceremony, but which hang down at the sides below their Ears, and which are adorned with counterfeit Stones, and with two Pendants of gilded wood. The *Cone* and the *Rabam* are always call'd at Funerals, and sometimes on other occasions; and 'tis probable that these Shows contain nothing Religious, since the *Talapins* are prohibited to be present thereat. The *Lacone* serves principally to solemnize the Feast of the Dedication of a new Temple, when a new Statue of their *Sommona-Codam* is plac'd therein.

^{Three sorts of Stage-Plays amongst the Siameses.}

This Festival is likewise accompany'd with races of Oxen, and several other Diversions, as of Wrestlers, and Men that fight with their Elbow and Fist. In Boxing, they guard their Hand with three or four rounds of Cord instead of the Copper Rings, which those of *Laos* do use in such Combats.

^{Wrestling and Boxing.}

The Running of Oxen is perform'd in this manner. They mark out a Place of 500 Fathom in length, and two in breadth, with four Trunks, which are planted at the four Corners, to serve as Boundaries; and it is round these Limits that the Course is run. In the middle of this place they erect a Scaffold for the Judges: and the more precisely to mark out the middle, which is the place from whence the Oxen were to start, they do plant a very high Post against the Scaffold. Sometimes 'tis only a single Ox which runs against another, the one and the other being guided by two Men running afoot, which do hold the Reins, or rather the String put into their Noses, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and other Men are posted at certain distances, to ease those which run. But most frequently it is a Yoke of Oxen fasten'd to a Plough, which runs against another Yoke of Oxen joined to another Plough; some Men guide them on the right side and on the left, as when it is only a single Ox which runs against another: But besides this, it is necessary that each Plough be so well sustained in the Air by a Man running, that it never touch the ground, for fear it retard the Animals that draw it; and these Men which thus support the Ploughs, are more frequently reliev'd than the others.

^{A Race of Oxen.}

Now tho' the Ploughs run both after the same manner, turning always to the right round the space which I have described, they set not out from the same place. The one starts at one side of the Scaffold, and the other at the other, to run reciprocally one after the other. Thus at the beginning of their Course they look from opposite places, and they are distant one from the other half a Circle, or half the space over which they were to run. Yet they run after the same manner, as I have said, turning several times round the four Boundaries, which I have mentioned, till the one overtakes the other. The Spectators are nevertheless all round, yet is it not necessary to have Bars to hinder from approaching too near. These Courses are sometimes the subjects of Bettings, and the Lords do breed and train up small, but well-proportion'd Oxen for this Exercise; and instead of Oxen, they do likewise make use of *Buffalos*.

A Race of
Balons.

I know not whether I ought to rank amongst the Shows, the Diversion which was given us of a Race of *Balons*; for in respect of the *Siameses* it is rather a Sport, than a Show. They chuse two *Balons* the most equal in all things as is possible, and they divide themselves into two Parties to bett. Then the Captains do bear a precipitate measure, not only by knocking with the end of a long *Bambou* which they have in their hands, but by their *Cryes*, and the Agitation of their whole Body. The Crew of Rowers excites itself also by several redoubled Acclamations, and the Spectator which betts, hollows also, and is in no less motion than if he really rowed. Oftentimes they commit not to the Captains the care of animating the Rowers, but two of the Bettors do execute this Office themselves.

The excessive
love of Gam-
ing.

The *Siameses* love Gaming to such an Excess as to ruine themselves, and lose their Liberty, or that of their Children: for in this Country, whoever has not wherewith to satisfy his Creditor, sells his Children to discharge the Debt; and if this satisfies not, he himself becomes a Slave. The Play which they love best, is *Tick-Tack*, which they call *Saca*, and which they have learnt perhaps from the *Portuguese*; for they play it like them and us. They play not at Cards, and their other hazardous Sports I know not; but they play at Chess after our and the *Chinese* way. At the end of this Work I will insert the Game of Chess of the *Chinese*.

The *Siameses*
love to smoke
Tobacco.

Tobacco-Smoke (for they take none in Snuff) is also one of their greatest pleasures, and the Women, even the most considerable, are entirely addicted thereunto. They have *Tobacco* from *Manille*, *China*, and *Siam*; and tho' these sorts of *Tobacco* are very strong, the *Siameses* do smoke it without any weakening it; but the *Chinese* and *Moors* do draw the Smoke through water, to diminish the strength thereof. The method of the *Chinese* is, to take a little water into their mouth, and then proceed to fill their mouth with *Tobacco-Smoke*, and afterwards they spit out the water and the Smoke at the same time. The *Moors* make use of a singular Instrument, the Description and Figure of which you will find at the end of this Work.

The common
life of a *Sia-
mese*.

Such are the Diversions of the *Siameses*, to which may be added the Domestic. They love their Wives and Children exceedingly, and it appears that they are greatly beloved by them. Whilst the Men acquit themselves of the six months work, which they every one yearly owe to the Prince, it belongs to their Wife, their Mother, or their Children to maintain them. And when they have satisfied the Service of their King, and they are return'd home, the generality know not unto what business to apply themselves, being little accustomed to any particular Profession; by reason the Prince employs them indifferently to all, as it pleases him. Hence it may be judged how lazy the ordinary life of a *Siamese* is. He works not at all, when he works not for his King: he walks not abroad; he hunts not: he does nothing almost but continue sitting or lying, eating, playing, smoking and sleeping. His Wife will wake him at 7 a clock in the morning, and will serve him with Rice and Fish: He will fall asleep again hereupon; and at Noon he will eat again, and will sup at the end of the day. Between these two last Meals will be his day; Conversation or Play will spend all the rest. The Women plough the Land, they sell and buy in the Cities. But it is time to speak of the Affairs and serious Occupations of the *Siamese*, that is to say of their Marriages, of the Education they give to their Children, of the Studies and Professions to which they apply themselves.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Concerning the Marriage and Divorce of the Siameſes.

TIs not the Cuſtom in this Country to permit unto Maids the Converſation of young men. The Mothers chaſtiſe them, when they ſurprize them ſo; but the Girls forbear not to get out, when they can; and this is not impoſſible towards the Evening.

The care they have of keeping their Daughters.

They are capable of having children at twelve years of Age, and ſometimes ſooner; and the greateſt part have none paſt forty. The Cuſtom is therefore to marry them very young, and the Boys in proportion. Yet there is found ſome *Siameſes*, who diſdain Marriage all their life, but there is not any that can turn *Talapineſſe*, that is to ſay, conſecrate her ſelf to a Religious life, who is not advanced in years.

At what Age they marry them.

When a Marriage is deſign'd, the Parents of the young man demand the Maid of her Parents, by women advanced in years and of good Reputation. If the Parents of the Maid have any inclination thereunto, they return a favourable Answer. Nevertheleſs they reſerve unto themſelves the liberty of conſulting firſt the mind of their Daughter; and at the ſame time they take the hour of the young mans Nativity, and give that of the Birth of the Maid: and both ſides go to the Southſayers to know principally whether the Party propoſed is rich, and whether the Marriage will continue till death without a divorce. As every one carefully conceals his riches, to ſecure them from the oppreſſion of the Magiſtrate, and the Covetouſneſs of the Prince, it is neceſſary that they go to the Southſayer, to know whether a Family is rich, and it is upon the advice of the Southſayers that they take their Reſolution. If the Marriage muſt be concluded, the young man goes to viſit the Lady three times, and carries her ſome preſents of *Betel* and Fruit, and nothing more precious. At the third Viſit the Relations on both ſides appear there likewiſe, and they count the Portion of the Bride, and what is given to the Bridegroom to whom the whole is delivered upon the ſpot, and in preſence of the Relations, but without any writing. The new married couple do alſo commonly receive on this occaſion ſome preſents from their Uncles: and from that time, and without any Religious Ceremony, the Bridegroom has a right to conſummate the Marriage. The *Talapins* are prohibited to be preſent thereat. Only ſome days after they go to the houſe of the New Married folks to ſprinkle ſome Holy-water, and to repeat ſome Prayers in the *Bah-Tongue*.

How a Siameſe ſeeks a Maid in Marriage, and how their Marriage is concluded.

The Wedding as in all other places, is attended with Feaſts and ſhows. They do hire and invite profeſt Dancers thereunto; but neither the Bridegroom, nor the Bride, nor any of the Gueſts do dance. The Feaſt is made at the houſe of the Brides Relations, where the Bridegroom takes care to build an Hall on purpoſe, which ſtands alone: And from thence the new married perſons are conducted into another ſingle Building, built alſo on purpoſe, at the expence and care of the Bridegroom, in the Incloſure of *Bamboo*, which makes the Incloſure of the Houſe of the Brides Relations. The new married perſons continue there ſome Months, and then go to ſettle where it pleaſes them beſt to build an Houſe for themſelves. A ſingular Ornament for the Daughters of the *Mandarins* which are married, is to put on their head that Circle of Gold, which the *Mandarins* put on their Bonnet of Ceremony. Next to this the decking conſiſts in having finer *Pagnes* then ordinary, more excellent Pendants, and more curious Rings on their Fingers, and in greater quantity. Some there are who report that the pretended father-in-Law, before the concluſion of the Marriage of his Daughter with his Son-in-Law, keeps him fix Months in his houſe, to know him better. Some abſolutely deny that this is true. And all that, in my opinion, may have given occaſion to the report, is that it belongs to the Bridegroom to build the Wedding Room; and Houſe, which he is to have at his Father.

The Nuptial Feaſt.

ther-in-Law's, during which, that is to say for two or three days at most, his future Spouse brings him Food, without dreading the Consequences thereof, because the Marriage is already concluded, altho' the Feast be deferred.

The Riches of the Marriages at *Siam*. The greatest Portion at *Siam* is an hundred *Catsé*, which do make 15000 Livres; and because it is common that the Bridegroom's Estate equals the Portion of the Bride, it follows that at *Siam* the greatest Fortune of two new married Persons exceeds not 10000 Crowns.

Of Plurality of Wives. The *Siamese* may have several Wives, tho' they think it would be best to have but one; and it is only the Rich that affect to have more, and that more out of Pomp and Grandeur, than out of Debauchery.

A considerable distinction between them. When they have several Wives, there is always one that is the chief: they call her the great Wife. The others, which they call the lesser Wives, are indeed legitimate, I mean permitted by the Laws, but they are subject to the Principal. They are only purchas'd Wives, and consequently Slaves; so that the Children of the little Wives do call their Father *Po Tchao*, that is to say *Father Lord*, whereas the Children of the principal Wife do call him simply *Po*, or *Father*.

The degrees of Alliance prohibited, and how the Kings of *Siam* dispense with this Article. Marriage in the first degrees of Kindred is prohibited them, yet they may marry their Cousin-German. And as to the degrees of Alliance, a Man may marry two Sisters one after the other, and not at the same time. Nevertheless the Kings of *Siam* do dispense with these Rules, and do think it hardly possible to find a Wife worthy of them, but in persons that are nearly related to them.

The present King married his Sister, and by this Marriage was born the Princess his only Daughter, whom it is said he has married. I could not find out the truth, but this is the common Report: And I think it probable, in that her House is erected as unto a Queen; and the Europeans who have call'd her the Princess-Queen, have made the same judgment thereof with me. The Relations inform us, that in other places, as well as at *Siam*, there are some Examples of these Marriages of the Brother with the Sister; and it is certain that they have been anciently frequent amongst a great many Pagan Nations, at least in the Royal Families: either to the end that the Daughter might succeed to the Crown with the Son, or out of the fear I have mention'd, that these Kings have had of misplacing their Alliances, if they married not their own Sisters. For as to what others add, that it is to the end that the People may not doubt of having a Sovereign of the Royal Blood, at least by his Mother, I find no probability therein as to the East, where the People are so little wedged to the Blood of their Kings, and where the Kings do think to assure themselves of the Fidelity of their Wives, by keeping them very closely.

The Laws of Succession for Widows and Children. The Succession in particular Families is all for the great Wife, and then for her Children, who inherit from their Parents by equal Portions. The little Wives and their Children may be sold by the Heir; and they have only what the Heir gives them, or what the Father before his death has given them from hand to hand, for the *Siamese* know not the use of Wills. The Daughters born of the little Wives, are sold to be themselves little Wives; and the most powerful purchasing the handsomest, without having any regard to the Parents from whom they descend, do after this manner make very unequal Alliances: and those with whom they make them, do not thereby acquire any more Honour or Protection.

Wherein consists the Fortune of a *Siamese*. The Estate of the *Siamese* consist chiefly in Moveables. If they have Lands, they have not much, by reason they cannot obtain the full Property thereof: It belongs always to their King, who at his pleasure takes away the Lands which he has sold to particular persons, and who frequently takes them again without returning the value. Nevertheless the Law of the Country is, that Lands should be hereditary in Families, and that particular persons may sell them one to another: But this Prince has regard only to this Law, as far as it suits him, because it cannot prejudice his Demesnes, which generally extend over all that his Subjects possess. This is the Reason that they get as few Immoveables as they can, and that they always endeavor to conceal their Moveables from the knowledge of their Kings: and because that Diamonds are Moveables the most easie

to hide and transport, they are mightily fought after at *Siam*, and in all *India*, and they sell them very dear. Sometimes the *Indian* Lords do at their death give part of their Estate to the King their Master, to secure the rest to their Family, and this generally succeeds.

The Families are almost all happy at *Siam*, as may be judged by the Fidelity of the Wives in nourishing their Husband, whilst he serves the King; A Service which by a kind of Oppression lasts not only six Months in a Year, but sometimes one, two, and three Years together. But when the Husband and Wife cannot support one another, they have the remedy of Divorce. 'Tis true that it is in practice only amongst the Populace; the Rich who have several Wives, do equally keep those they love not, and those they love.

The Husband is naturally the Master of the Divorce, but he never refuseth it to his Wife, when she absolutely desires it. He restores her Portion to her, and their Children are divided amongst them in this manner. The Mother has the first, the third, the fifth, and so all the odd ones. The Father has the second, fourth, sixth, and all the even ones. Hence it happens, that if there is no more than one Child, it is for the Mother; and that if the number of Children is unequal, the Mother has one more: whether that they judge the Mother would take more care thereof, than the Father; or that having born them in her womb, or nourished them with her milk, she seems to have a greater Right therein, than the Father; or that being weaker, she has more need of the succor of her Children than he.

After the Divorce, it is lawful for the Husband and Wife to marry again with whom they please; and it is free for the Woman to do it in the very day of the Divorce, they not troubling themselves with the Doubt that may thence arise touching the Father of the first Child, that may be born after the second Marriage. They rely on what the Wife says thereof; a great sign of the little Jealousie of this People. But tho' the Divorce be permitted them, yet they consider it as a very great Evil, and as the almost certain Ruine of the Children, which are ordinarily very ill treated in the second Marriages of their Parents. So that this is one of the Causes assigned why the Country is not populous; altho' the *Siamese* are fruitful, and do very frequently bring Twins.

The power of the Husband is despotical in his Family, even to the selling his Children and Wives, his principal Wife excepted, whom he can only repudiate. The Widows inherit the power of their Husbands, with this restriction, that they cannot sell the Children which they have of the even number, if the Father's Relations oppose it; for the Children dare not. After the Divorce, the Father and Mother may each sell the Children which fell to them by lot, according to the Division I have mentioned. But the Parents cannot kill their Children, nor the Husband his Wives, by reason that in general all Murder is prohibited at *Siam*.

The Love of free persons is not ignominious, at least amongst the Populace: It is there look'd upon as a Marriage; and Incontinency as a Divorce. Nevertheless the Parents do carefully watch their Daughters, as I have said; and Children are no where permitted to dispose of themselves to the prejudice of the paternal Power, which is the most natural of all Laws. Moreover, the *Siamese* are naturally too proud easily to give themselves to Foreigners, or at least to invite them. The *Peguins* which are at *Siam*, as being Strangers themselves, do more highly esteem of Foreigners; and do pass for debauched persons in the minds of those who understand not that they seek a Husband. Thus they continue faithful until they are abandon'd; and if they prove big with Child, they are not less esteem'd amongst those of their Nation, and they do even glory in having had a white Man for a Husband. It may be also that they are of a more amorous Complexion than the *Siamese*; they have at least more spirit and briskness. 'Tis an established opinion in the *Indies*, that the people have more or less vigor and spirit, according as they are nearer, or remoter from *Pegu*.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the Education of the Siamese Children, and first of their Civility.

The love of the Siamese Children for their Parents. **T**HE *Siamese* Children have docility and sweetness, provided they be not discountenanc'd. Their Parents know how to make themselves extremely beloved and respected, and to inspire an extream Civility in them. Their Instructions are marvellously assisted by the Despotick Power, which I have said they have in their Family; but the Parents do also answer unto the Prince for the Faults of their Children. They share in their Chastisements, and more especially are obliged to deliver them up when they have offended. And tho' the Son be fled, he never fails to return and surrender himself, when the Prince apprehends his Father, or his Mother, or his other collateral Relations, but older than himself, and to whom he owes Respect: And this is a great proof of the love of the *Siamese* Children to their Parents.

Civility necessary to the Siamese. As to Civility, it is so great throughout the East, even amongst Strangers, that an *European* who has liv'd there a long time, finds much difficulty to re-acustom himself to the Familiarities of these Countries. The *Indian* Princes being very much given to Traffic, they love to invite Strangers amongst them, and they protect them even against their own Subjects. And hence it is that the *Siamese* do for Example appear savage, and that they eschew the Conversation of Strangers. They know that they are thought always to be in the wrong, and that they are always punish'd in the Quarrels they have with them. The *Siamese* do therefore educate their Children in an extream Modesty, by reason that it is necessary in Trade, and much more in the Service, which for six Months in the Year they render unto the King, or to the *Mandarins* by order of their King.

Their Inclination to Silence. Silence is not greater amongst the *Carthusians*, than it is in the Palace of this Prince; the Lords dispense not therewith more than others. The sole desire of speaking, never excites the *Siamese* to say any thing that may displease. 'Tis necessary that they be thoroughly convinced that you would know the truth of any thing, to embolden them to declare it against your opinion. They do in nothing affect to appear better instructed than you, not in the things of their own Country, altho' you be a Stranger.

The Raillery amongst them. They appear'd to me very far from all sort of Raillery, by reason they understand not any, perhaps thro' the fault of the Interpreters. 'Tis principally in matter of Raillery, that this ancient Proverb of the *Indians* is verified, *That things best weighed, when delivered by an Interpreter, are as a pure Spring which runs thro' mud.* Most safe it is to droll little with Strangers, even with those that understand our Language; because that Railleries are the last thing that they understand, and that it is easie to offend them with a Raillery which they understand not. I doubt not therefore that the *Siamese* know how to jest wittily one with another. Some have assur'd me, that they do it frequently amongst Equals, and even in Verse; and that as well the Women as the Men are all very readily vers'd therein; the most ordinary method of which is amongst them a continued Raillery, wherein emulously appears the briskness of the Answers and Repartees. I have observ'd the same thing amongst the people of Spain.

The Politeness of the Siamese Language. But when they enter into earnest, their Language is much more capable than our's, of whatever denotes Respect and Distinction. They give, for instance, certain Titles to certain Officers, as amongst us are the Titles of *Excellence* and *Greatness*. Moreover, these words *Land* and *Me*, indifferent in our Language, do express themselves by several terms in the *Siamese* Tongue; the one of which is from the Master to the Slave, and the other from the Slave to the Master. Another is from the Man of the people to a Lord; and a fourth is us'd amongst

amongst Equals; and some there are which are only in the mouth of *Talapouts*. The word *Tou* and *He* are not expressed in fewer manners. And when they speak of Women, (because that in their Tongue there is no distinction of Genders into Masculine and Feminine) they add to the Masculine the word *Nang*, which in the *Balie* Language signifies *Young*, to imply the Feminine, as if we should say for Example, *Young Prince*, instead of *Princefs*. It seems that their Civility hinders them from thinking that Women can ever grow old.

By the same Complaisance they call them by the most precious or most agreeable things of Nature, as *young Diamond*, *young Gold*, *young Crystal*, *young Flower*. The Princefs, the King's Daughter, is called *Nang fa*, *young Heaven*; if he had a Son, he would be called, as some report, *Tchaou fa*, *Lord of Heaven*. 'Tis certain that the white Elephant which *Mr. de Chaumont* saw at *Siam*, and which was dead when we arriv'd there, had attain'd to an extreme old Age; yet because it was a Female, and that they believe moreover that in the Body of white Elephants there is always a Royal Soul, they called her *verbatim*, *Nang Paja Tchang penac*, *young Prince white Elephant*.

The words which the *Siameses* use by way of Salute, are *cavai Tchaou*, I salute Lord. And, if 'tis really a Lord that salutes an Inferior, he will bluntly answer, *Raou vai*, I salute, or *ca vai*, which signifies the same thing; altho' the word *ca*, which signifies *me*, ought to be naturally only in the mouth of a Slave speaking to his Master; and that the word *Raou*, which also signifies *me*, denotes some dignity in him that speaks. To ask, *How do you?* they say, *Tjou de? Kindi?* That is to say, *Do you continue well? Do you eat well?*

But it is a singular Observation, that it is not permitted a *Siamese* to ask his Inferior any News concerning their King's health; as if it was a Crime in him, that approaches near the person of the Prince, to be less informed thereof, than another that is obliged to keep at a greater distance.

Their civil posture of Sitting is as the *Spaniards* sit, crossing their Legs; and they are so well accusom'd thereunto, that, even on a Seat when given them, they place themselves no otherwise.

When they bow, they do not stand; but if they sit not cross-leg'd, they bow themselves out of respect to one another. The Slaves and the Servants before their Masters, and the common People before the Lords keep on their knees, with their Body seated on their heels, their head a little inclin'd, and their hands joined at the top of their forehead. A *Siamese* which passeth by another, to whom he would render Respect, will pass by stooping with joined hands more or less elevated, and will salute him no otherwise.

In their Visits, if it is a very inferior person that makes it, he enters stooping into the Chamber, he prostrates himself, and remains upon his knees, and sitting upon his heels after the manner that I have described; but he dares not to speak first. He must wait till he to whom he pays the Visit, speaks to him: and thus the *Mandarins* that came to visit us on the behalf of the King of *Siam*, waited always till I spake to them first. If it is a Visit amongst Equals, or if the Superior goes to see the Inferior, the Master of the House receives him at the Hall-door, and at the end of the Visit he accompanies him thither, and never any further. Moreover, he walks either upright, or stooping, according to the degree of Respect which he owes to the Visitor. He likewise observes to speak first, or last, according as he can, or as he ought; but he always offers his place to him whom he receives at his House, and invites him to accept it. He afterwards serves him with Fruit and Preserves, and sometimes with Rice and Fish; and more especially he with his own hand presents him with *Arak* and *Betel*, and *Tea*. The common People forget not *Arak*, and Persons of Quality do sometimes accommodate themselves therewith. At the end of the Visit, the Stranger first testifies that he will go; as amongst us, and the Master of the House consents thereto with very obliging Expressions, and he must be greatly superior to him that renders him the Visit, to bid him depart.

The highest place is so far the most honourable according to them, that they dared not to go into the first Story, even for the service of the House, when the King's

The Names of the Siameses.

The words which the Siameses use in saluting.

How they are permitted to ask News of their King's health.

How they sit.

Their Posture

Their Ceremonies in Visits.

To what degree the highest place is the most honourable.

Kings Ambassadors were in the lower Hall. In the Houses, which strangers do build of Brick above one story, they observe that the undermost part of the Stairs never serves for a passage, for fear lest any one should go under the feet of another that ascends: but the *Siamese* build no more than one story, by reason that the bottom would be useless to them, no person amongst them being willing either to go or lodge under the feet of another. For this reason, though the *Siamese* Houses be erected on Piles, they never make use of the under part, not so much as in the Kings House, whose Palace being uneven, has some pieces higher than others, the under part of which might be inhabited. I remember that when the Ambassadors of *Siam* came to an Inn near *Vincennes*, the first Ambassador being lodged in the first story, and the others in the second, the second Ambassador perceiving that he was above the King his Masters Letter, which the first Ambassador had with him, ran hastily out of his Chamber bewailing his offence, and tearing his hair in despair.

The right hand is more honourable than the left at *Siam*.

At *Siam* the right hand is more honourable than the left: the floor of the Chamber opposite to the door is more honourable than the sides; and the sides more than the wall where the door is, and the wall which is on the right hand of him that sits on the floor, is more honourable than that which is on his left hand. Thus in the Tribunals, no person sits on the Bench fixed to the wall which is directly opposite to the door, save the President, who alone has a determinative Vote. The Councillors, who only have a Consultative Vote, are seated on other lower Benches along the side-walls, and the other Officers along the wall of the door. After the same manner, if any one receives an important visit, he places the Visitor alone on the floor of the Chamber, and seats himself with his back towards the door, or towards one of the sides of the Chamber.

Why the Cities at *China* are all after one Model.

These Ceremonies and a great many others are so precise at *China*; that it is necessary that the Entries of the Houses, and the Rooms where particular persons receive their Visits, and those where they entertain their Friends, be all after one model, to be able to observe the same Civilities. But this Uniformity of building, and of turning the buildings to the South, so that they front the North in their entering in, has been much more indispensable in the Tribunals, and in all the other publick houses; inasmuch that whoever sees one City in this great Kingdom sees them all.

The exactness of the *Siamese* in their Ceremonies.

Now Ceremonies are as essential, and almost as numerous at *Siam* as at *China*. A Mandarin carries himself one way before his Inferiors, and another way before his Superiors. If there are several *Siamese* together, and there unexpectedly comes in another, it frequently happens that the posture of all changes. They know before whom, and to what degree, they must keep themselves inclined or strait, or sitting: whether they must joyn their hands or not, and keep them high, or low: whether being seated they may advance one Foot, or both; or whether they must keep them both conceal'd by sitting on their heels. And the miscarriages in these sorts of duties may be punished with the cudgel by him to whom they are committed, or by his orders, and on the spot. So that there is not introduced amongst them those Airs of familiarity, which in diversions do attract rudeness, injuries, blows and quarrels, and sometimes intemperance and impudence: they are always restrained by reciprocal respects. What some report concerning the *Chinese* Hat, is a thing very pleasant. It has no brim before nor behind, but only at the sides: and this brim, which terminates in an oval, is so little fastened to the body of the Hat, that it flaps, and renders a man ridiculous, at the least irregular motion which he makes of his head. Thus these people have imagined, that the less men are at ease, the fewer faults they commit.

They are accustomed therunto from their infancy.

But all these forms, which seem to us very troublesome, appear not so to them, by reason they are early accustomed therunto. Custom renders the distinctions less severe to them, than they would be to us: and much more the thoughts that they may enjoy it in their turn: He that is Superior or Inferior to day, changing his condition to morrow, according to the Prudence, or the Capricious Humor of the Prince. The hereditary distinctions which the Birth does here

here give to so many persons who are sometimes without merit, will not appear less hard to undergo, to him who should not be thereto accustomed, or who should not comprehend that the most precious recompence of Vertue is that, which one hopes to transmit to his posterity.

The Custom is therefore at *Siam* and *China*, that when the Superior would discreetly manage the Inferior, and testify a great deal of consideration for him (as it sometimes happens in the intrigues of Court) the Superior affects publickly to avoid the meeting the Inferior; to spare him the publick submissions, with which he could not dispense if they should meet him. Moreover, affability towards Inferiors, Easiness of access, or going before them, do pass for weakness in the *Indies*.

How the great men dispense with these in their Inferiors

The *Siamese* constrain not themselves to belching in conversation, neither turn they aside their face, or put any thing before their mouth, no more than the *Spaniards*. 'Tis no incivility amongst them to wipe off the Sweat of their forehead with their Fingers, and then to shake them against the ground. For this purpose we use a Handkerchief, and few of the *Siamese* have any: which is the reason why they very slovenly perform every thing whereunto the Handkerchief is necessary. They dare to spit neither on the Mats; nor the Carpets; and because they are in all houses a little furnished, they make use of spitting-pots which they carry in their hand. In the Kings Palace they neither cough, nor spit, nor wipe their Nose. The *Betel* which they continually chew, and the juice of which they swallow at pleasure, hinders them: Nevertheless they cannot take *Betel* in the Prince's presence, but only continue to chew that which they have already in their Mouth. They refuse nothing that is offered them, and dare not to say, I have enough.

Certain things incident amongst us are not so amongst them, and on the contrary.

As the most eminent place is always amongst them the most honourable, the head, as the highest part of the body, is also the most respected. To touch any person on the head or the hair, or to stroke ones hand over the head, is to offer him the greatest of all affronts. To touch his Bonnet, if he leaves it any where, is a great incivility. The mode of this Country amongst the *Europeans* which dwell there, is never to leave their Hat in a low place, but to give it to a Servant, who carries it higher than his Head, at the end of a Stick, and without touching it; and this Stick has a foot, to the end that it may stand up, if he that carries it, be obliged to leave it.

What is the greatest Affront amongst the *Siamese*.

The most respectful, or to say better, the most humble posture, is that in which they do all keep themselves continually before their King: in which they express to him more respect than the *Chinese* do to theirs. They keep themselves prostrate on their knees and elbows, with their hands joyned at the top of their forehead, and their body seated on their heels; to the end that they may lean less on their elbows, and that it may be possible (without assisting themselves with their hands, but keeping them still joyned to the top of their forehead) to raise themselves on their knees, and fall again upon their elbows, as they do thrice together, as often as they would speak to their King: I have remark'd, that when they are thus prostrate, they lean their back-part on one side or other, as much as possibly they can, without displacing their knees; as it were to lessen and undervalue themselves the more.

What postures are more or less respectful.

By the same principle, it is not only more honourable, according to them, to be seated on a high seat, than on a low seat; but it is much more honourable to be standing than sitting. When *Mr. de Chalmont* had his first audience, it was necessary that the *French* Gentlemen which accompany'd him, should enter first into the Hall, and seat themselves on their heels, before the King of *Siam* appeared; to the end that this Prince might not see them a moment standing. They were prohibited to rise up to salute him, when he appeared. This Prince never suffered the Bishops nor the Jesuits to appear standing before him in the Audiences. It is not permitted to stand in any place of the Palace, unless while walking: and if in this last Voyage of 1687, at the first audience of the Kings Ambassadors, the *French* Gentlemen had the honour of entering, when the King of *Siam* was already visible, it was only because the *Mandarins*, which had accompanied the Ambassadors of *Siam* into *France*, were admitted into the

Gallery of *Verfailles*, when the King was seated on the Throne which he had erected there.

How the King of *Siam* accommodates the Ceremonies of his Court, to those of the Court of *France*.

The King of *Siam* had that respect for the King of *France*, as to acquaint him by *M^r. de Chaumont*, that if there was any Custom in his Court which was not in the Court of *France*, he would alter it; and when the King's Ambassadors arrived in this Country, the King of *Siam* affected indeed to make them a Reception different in several things from that which he had made to *M^r. de Chaumont*, to conform it the more to that which he understood the King had made to his Ambassadors. He did one thing, when *M^r. des Farges* saluted him, which never had any Precedent at *Siam*: for he commanded that all the Officers of his Court should stand in his presence, as did *M^r. des Farges*, and the other *French* Officers which accompany'd him.

Why I chose to speak to the King of *Siam* rather standing, than sitting.

Remembering therefore that *M^r. de Chaumont* had demanded to compliment him sitting, and knowing that his Ambassadors had spoken standing to the King, (an Honour which he highly esteem'd) he informed me, that he would grant me the liberty to speak to him sitting or standing; and I chose to deliver all my Compliments standing: And if I could have raised my self higher, I should have received more Honour. 'Twas in the King of *Siam*, as they informed me, a mark of respect for the King's Letters, not to receive them standing, but sitting.

Another *Siamese* Civility.

To lay a thing upon one's head, which is given, or received, is at *Siam*, and in a great many other Countries, a very great mark of respect. The *Spaniards*, for Example, are obliged by an express Law to render this respect to the *Cedules*, or written Orders, which they receive from their King. The King of *Siam* was pleas'd to see me put the King's Letter on my head, in delivering it to him: he cry'd out, and demanded, *Where I had learnt that Civility w^od in his Country?* He had lifted up to his Forehead the King's Letter, which *M^r. de Chaumont* deliver'd him; but understanding, by the report of his Ambassadors, that this Civility was not known in the Court of *France*, he omitted it, in regard of the King's Letter, which I had the Honour to deliver him.

The manner of saluting among the *Siameses*.

When a *Siamese* salutes, he lifts up either both his hands join'd, or at least his right hand to the top of his forehead, as it were to put him whom he salutes on his head. As often as they take the liberty to answer to their King, they always begin again with these words, *Pra poui Tchaou-ca; co rap pra oncau fai chon fai cramon*: That is to say, *High and Mighty Lord of me thy Slave, I desire to take thy Royal Word, and put it on my Brain, and on the top of my Head*. And it is from these words *Tchaou-ca*, which signifie *Lord of me thy Slave*, that amongst the *French* is sprung up this way of speaking *faire echo*, to signifie *Ta vai bang com*, or to prostrate himself after the *Siamese* manner. *Faire la Zambaye* to the King of *Siam*, signifies to present him a *Petition*, which cannot be done without performing the *coucha*. I know not from whence the *Portugueses* have borrow'd this way of speaking. If you stretch out your hand to a *Siamese* to take hold on his, he puts both his hands underneath yours, as to put himself entirely into your power. 'Tis an Incivility, in their opinion, to give only one hand, as also not to hold what they present you, with both their hands, and not to take with both hands what they receive from you. But let this suffice as concerning the Civility with which the *Siameses* inspire their Children, altho' I have not exhausted this Subject.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Studies of the *Siameses*.

They put their Children to the *Talapoints*.

When they have educated their Children to seven or eight years old, they put them into a Convent of *Talapoints*, and make them assume the habit of a *Talapoint*: for it is a Profession which obliges not, and which is quitted

at

at pleasure without disgrace. These little *Talapouts* are called *Nen* : they are not Pensioners, but their Friends do daily send them Food. Some of these *Nens* are of a good Family, and have one or more Slaves to wait upon them.

They are taught principally to Read, to Write, and to cast Account; by reason that nothing is more necessary to Merchants, and that all the *Siamese* do exercise Traffic. They are taught the Principles of their Morality, and the Fables of their *Sammona Codom*, but no History, nor Law, nor any Science. They likewise teach them the *Balie* Tongue, which, as I have more than once declared, is the language of their Religion, and their Laws; and few amongst them do make any progress therein, if they do not a long time adhere to the profession of the *Talapout*, or if they enter not into some offices: for it is in these two Cafes only that this language is useful to them.

They write the *Siamese* and *Balie* from the left hand to the right, after the same manner as we write our Languages of *Europe*: in which they differ from most of the other *Asiatics*, who have ever wrote from the right to the left; and from the *Chinefe* also, who draw the line from the top to the bottom; and who in the ranging of the lines in one Page, do put the first on the right hand, and the others successively towards the left. They are different also from the *Chinefes*, in that they have not like them a Character for every word, or even for every signification of a single word; to the end that the writing may have no Equivocations like the Language. The *Siamese* and *Balie* Tongues have, like ours, an Alphabet of few letters, of which are compos'd syllables and words. Moreover, the *Siamese* Language participates greatly of the *Chinefe*, in that it has a great deal of Accent, (for their Voice frequently rises above one fourth) and in that it consists almost all of Monosyllables: so that it may be presumed, that if one perfectly understood it, one should find that the few words which it has of several syllables, are either foreign, or compos'd of Monosyllables, some of which are used only in these Compositions.

But the most remarkable Similitude that is between these two Languages, and which is not found in the *Balie*, is that neither the one nor the other have any Declension or Conjugation, nor perhaps Derivations, which the *Balie* has. As for Example, the word which signifies *Content*, may likewise signify *Contentment*; and that which signifies *Good*, will signify *Well*, and *Bounty*, according to the various ways of using them. The placing alone denotes the Cafes in Nouns, and herein their disposition is hardly different from ours. And as to the Conjugations, the *Siamese* have only four or five small Particles, which they put sometimes before the Verb, and sometimes after, to signify the Numbers, Tenses, and Moods thereof. I will insert them at the end of this Volume, with the *Siamese* and *Balie* Alphabets; and it is in this that their whole Grammar almost consists.

Their Dictionary is not less simple: I mean, that their Language is not copious; but the turn of their Phrase is only more various, and more difficult. In cold Countries, where the Imagination is cold, every thing is called by its Name; and they do there abound as much or more in words, than in things. And when one has fixed all these words in his memory, he may promise himself to speak well. It is not the same in hot Countries, few words do there suffice to express much, by reason that the briskness of the Imagination employs them in an hundred different ways, all figurative. Take two or three Examples of the methods of speaking *Siamese*. *Good Heart* signifies *Content*, thus to say, *If I was at Siam, I should be content*; they said, *If I were City Siam, me heart good much*. *Sii* signifies *Light*, and by a Metaphor *Beauty*; and by a second Metaphor, this word *Sii* being joined with *Pak*, which signifies *Mouth*; *Sii-pak*, signifies the Lips; as if one should say, *The Light, or Beauty of the Mouth*. Thus, *The Glory of the Wood*, signifies a Flower; the Son of the Water implies in general, whatever is ingender'd in the Water without it be Fish; as Crocodiles, and all sorts of aquatic Insects. And on other occasions, the word *Son* will only denote *Smallness*, as the Sons of the Weights, to signify small Weights, contrary to the word *Mother*, which in certain things they make use of to signify Greatness. In short, I have not seen any words in this Language that have resemblance to ours;

The *Balie* and *Siamese* Languages compared with the *Chinefe*.

The *Siamese* and *Chinefe* Languages have no Declensions of words, the *Balie* has.

The *Siamese* Language not copious, but very figurative.

ours, excepting those of *po* and *me*, which signifie *Faiber* and *Maber*, in *Chinese* *fu, mu*.

Arithmetic.

I proceed to Arithmetic, which after Reading and Writing, is the principal Study of the *Siamese*. Their Arithmetic, like ours, hath ten Characters, with which they figure the Nought like us, and to which they give the same Powers as we, in the same disposition, placing, like us, from the Right to the Left, Unites, Tens, Hundreds, Thousands, and all the other Powers of the Number Ten. The *Indian* Merchants are so well vers'd in casting Accompt, and their Imagination is so clear thereupon, that it is said they can presently resolve very difficult Questions of Arithmetic; but I suppose likewise that they do never resolve what they cannot resolve immediately. They love not to trouble their heads, and they have no use of *Algebra*.

An Instrument which serves for an Abacus, or Computing Table.

The *Siamese* do always calculate with a Pen; but the *Chinese* make use of an Instrument which resembles the *Abacus*, and which *F. Martinus*, in his History of *China*, intimates, that they invented about 1600 or 2700 years before Jesus Christ. However it be, *Pignori*, in his Book de *Servis*, informs us, that this Instrument was familiar to the ancient *Roman* Slaves that were appointed to cast Accompt. I give the Description and Figure thereof at the end of this Work.

The *Siamese* not proper for Studies of Application.

The Studies to which we apply our selves in our Colleges, are almost absolutely unknown to the *Siamese*; and it may be doubted whether they are fit for such. The essential Character of the People of Countries extremely hot, or extremely cold, is sluggishness of Mind and Body; with this difference, that it degenerates into Stupidity in Countries too cold, and that in Countries too hot, there is always Spirit and Imagination; but of that sort of Imagination and Spirit, which soon flags with the least Application.

They have Imagination and Laziness.

The *Siamese* do conceive easily and clearly, their Repartees are witty and quick, their Objections are rational. They imitate immediately, and from the first day they are tolerable good Workmen: so that one would think a little Study would render them very accomplished, either in the highest Sciences, or in the most difficult Arts; but their invincible Laziness suddenly destroys these hopes. It is no wonder therefore if they invent nothing in the Sciences which they love best, as Chymistry and Astronomy.

They are naturally Poets, and their Poetry is Rhyme.

I have already said that they are naturally Poets. Their Poetry, like ours; and that which is now used throughout the known World, consists in the number of Syllables, and in Rhyme. Some do attribute the Invention thereof to the *Arabians*, by reason it seems to have been they that have carried it every where. The Relations of *China* report, that the *Chinese* Poetry at present is in Rhyme; but tho' they speak of their ancient Poetry, of which they still have several Works, they declare not of what nature it was, because, in my opinion, it is difficult to judge thereof: for tho' the *Chinese* have preserved the sense of their ancient Writing, they have not preserved their ancient Language. However, I can hardly comprehend from a Language wholly consisting of Monosyllables, and full of accented Vowels, and compounded Diphthongs, that if the Poetry consists not in Rhyme, it can consist in Quantity, as did the *Greek* and *Latin* Poems.

Their Genius in Poetry.

I could not get a *Siamese* Song well translated, so different is their way of thinking from ours; yet I have seen some Pictures, as for Example, of a pleasant Garden, where a Lover invites his Mistress to come. I have also seen some Expressions, which to me appear'd full of Smoothness, and gross Immodesty; altho' this had not the same Effect in their Language. But besides Love-Songs, they have likewise some Historical and Moral Songs altogether: I have heard the *Pagayers* sing some, of which they made me to understand the sense. The *Lacone* which I have mentioned, is no other than a Moral and Historical Song; and some have told me, that one of the Brothers of the King of *Siam* compos'd some Moral Poems very highly esteem'd, to which he himself set the Tune.

They are no Orators.

But if the *Siamese* are born Poets, they neither are born, nor do become Orators. Their Books are either Narrations of a plain Style, or some Sentences of

of a broken Style full of *Idea's*. They have no Advocates : the Parties do each declare their Cause to the Register, who, without any Rhetoric, writes down the Facts and Reasons which are told him. When they preach; they read the *Balie* Text of their Books, and they translate and expound it plainly in *Siamese*, without any Action, like our Professors, and not our Preachers.

They know how to speak to a Buzinels, and do therein manage themselves with a great deal of Insinuation; but as for their Compliments, they are all after one Model, which is indeed very good; but which is the reason that in the same Ceremonies they do always speak almost the same things. The King of *Siam* himself has his words almost counted in his Audiences of Ceremony; and he spake to the King's Ambassadors almost the same that he had deliver'd to Mr. de Chaumont, and before him to the late Bishop of *Helipolis*.

Their Com-
pliments al-
ways the
same.

I have not forgot that excellent Speech which the Ambassador of *Siam* made to the King at his Audience of Leave, and which alone might cause a Belief that the *Siamese* are great Orators; if we could judge of the merit of the Original, by that of the Translation: But this is difficult, especially in two Languages, which have so little similitude one to the other. All that we ought to think thereof, is, that the main of the Design and Thought is the *Siamese* Ambassador's; and I wonder not that he has admir'd the excellent Meen, the Majestic Air, the Power, the Affability, and all the extraordinary qualities of the King. They ought to amaze him more than another, because that these Virtues are absolutely unknown in the East; and if he had dar'd to declare the Truth, he would have confessed that the Flattery natural to those of his Country, had made him all his life to extol those very things where they were not, and that he saw the first Example thereof in the King. When the *Mandarins* came on Board our Ship to carry the first Compliment of the King of *Siam* to the King's Ambassadors, they took Leave of them, by testifying unto them that they demanded it unwillingly, and out of an indispensable necessity of going to satisfy the Impatience of the King their Master, about the things which they had to relate unto him: A Thought natural and good, on which runs the whole beginning of the Ambassador's Speech of Leave. And as to that excellent place where he ends, that their Relation of him and his Colleagues would be put into the Archives of the Kingdom of *Siam*; and that the King their Master would do him an Honour to send him to the Princes his Allies, he was in this a less Orator, than Historian. He render'd an account of a Practice of his Country, which is not omitted in great occasions, and which is in use in other Kingdoms. One Example there is in *Oforius*, in the 8th Book of his History of *Emanuel* King of *Portugal*, where he relates how *Alphonso*, the 2^d Christian King of *Congo*, inserted into his Argives the History of his Conversion, and that of another famous Embassy which he had received from *Emanuel*, and how he imparted it to all the Princes his Vassals. We may therefore be assured, that the *Siamese* are not Orators, and that they never have need to be such. Their Custom is not to make either Speech or Compliment to the Princes to whom they send them, but to answer the things about which these Princes interrogate them. They made a Speech at this Court, to accommodate themselves to our Customs, and to enjoy an Honour they highly valued; which was, to speak to the King, before his Majesty spake to them. This is all we can say of their Poetry, and their Rhetoric.

The last
Speech which
the Ambassa-
dor of *Siam*
made in
France.

They absolutely ignore all the parts of Philosophy, except some Principles of Morality, where, as we shall see in discoursing of the *Talapains*, they have intermixt Truth with Falshood. I will at the same time also demonstrate, that they have not any sort of Theology, and that we might perhaps justify them about the worshipping of the false Deities whereof they are accused, by an Impiety more culpable, which is not to acknowledge any Divinity neither true nor false.

They have a
Moral Philo-
sophy, and no
Theology.

They study not the Civil Law: They learn the Laws of their Country only in Employments. They are not Public, as I have said, for want of Printing; but when they enter into any Office, they put into their hands a Copy of the Laws which concern it: And the same thing is practis'd in *Spain*, tho' the

Laws

Laws be there in the hands of all persons, and that there are publick Schools, to teach them. As for example, in the Provisions of a *Corregidor* they will insert the whole Title of the *Corregidor*, which is in the compiling of their Ordinances and Decrees. I have likewise seen some example of this in *France*.

CHAP. X.

What the Siameses do know in Medicine and Chymistry.

The King of Siam has his Physicians from divers Countries.

They understand not Chyrurgery nor Anatomy.

They have not any principle, but Receipts.

The Chinese Physicians are great Mountebanks.

The difference of the Chinese Mountebanks from ours

Medicine cannot merit the name of a Science amongst the *Siameses*. The King of *Siam*'s principal Physicians are *Chineses*; and he has also some *Siameses* and *Peguins*: and within two or three years he has admitted into this quality *Mr. Pamart*, one of the *French* Secular Missionaries, on whom he relies more than on all his other Physicians. The others are obliged to report daily unto him the state of this Prince's health, and to receive from his hand the Remedies which he prepares for him.

Their chief Ignorance is to know nothing in Chyrurgery, and to stand in need of the *Europeans*, not only for Trapanes, and for all the other difficult Operations of Chyrurgery, but for simple Blood-lettings. They are utterly ignorant of Anatomy: and so far from having excited their Curiosity to discover either the Circulation of the Blood, or all the new things, that we know touching the structure of the body of Animals, that they open not the dead bodies, till after having roasted them in their Funeral solemnities, under pretence of burning them; and they open them only to seek wherewith to abuse the superstitious credulity of the people. For example, they alledge that they sometimes find in the Stomach of the dead, great pieces of fresh Pig's flesh, or of some other Animal, about eight or ten pound in weight: and they suppose that it has been put therein by some Divination, and that it is good to perform others.

They trouble not themselves to have any principle of Medicine, but only a number of Receipts, which they have learnt from their Ancestors, and in which they never alter any thing. They have no regard to the particular symptoms of diseases: and yet they fail not to cure a great many; because that the natural Temperance of the *Siameses* preserves them from a great many evils difficult to cure. But when at last it happens that the Distemper is stronger than the Remedies, they fail not to attribute the cause thereof to Inchantment.

The King of *Siam* understanding one day that I was somewhat indisposed, tho it was so little, that I kept not my Chamber, he had the goodness to send all his Physicians to me. The *Chineses* offer'd some Civility to the *Siameses* and *Peguins*: and then they made me sit, and sat down themselves: and after having demanded silence, for the company was numerous, they felt my pulse one after the other a long time, to make me suspect that it was not only a grimace. I had read that at *China* there is no School for Physicians, and that one is there admitted to exercise the profession thereof, at most by a slight examination made by a Magistrate of Justice, and not by Doctors in Physick. And I knew moreover, that the *Indians* are great Cheats, and the *Chineses* much greater. So that I had thoroughly resolv'd to get rid of these Doctors without making any experience of their Remedies. After having felt my pulse, they said that I was a little feverish, but discern'd it not at all: they added that my Stomach was out of order, and I perceiv'd it not, save that my voice was a little weak. The next morning the *Chineses* return'd alone to present me a small Potion warm, in a China Cup cover'd and very neat. The smell of the remedy pleas'd me, and made me to drink it, and I found my self neither better nor worse.

'Tis well known that there are Mountebanks every where, and that every Man who will boldly promise Health, Pleasures, Riches, Honors, and the knowledge of Futurities, will always find Fools. But the difference that there

is

is between the Mountebanks of *China* and the Quacks of *Europe* on the account of Medicine, is that the *Chineſes* do abuse the ſick by pleaſant and enticing Remedies, and that the *Europeans* do give us Drugs, which the humane Body feels to get rid off by all manner of means: ſo that we are inclined to believe that they would not thus torment a ſick perſon, if it was not certainly very neceſſary.

When any perſon is ſick at *Siam*, he begins with cauſing his whole body to be moulded by one that is ſkilful herein, who gets upon the Body of the ſick perſon, and tramples him under his feet. 'Tis likewiſe reported that great belly'd women do thus cauſe themſelves to be trodden under foot by a Child, to procure themſelves to be delivered with leſs pain: for in hot Countries, though their Deliveries ſeem to be more eaſie by the natural Conformation of the women, yet they are very painful, by reaſon perhaps that they are preceded with leſs Evacuation.

What Remedies are uſed at *Siam*.

Antiently the *Indians* apply'd no other Remedy to plenitude, than an Exceſſive diet; and this is ſtill the principal ſubtilty of the *Chineſes* in Medicine. The *Chineſes* do now make uſe of Blood-letting, provided they may have an *European* Chyrurgion: and ſometimes inſtead of Blood-letting they do uſe Cupping-glaſſes, Scarifications and Leeches.

They have ſome Purgatives which we make uſe of, and others which are peculiar to them; but they know not the *Heliebore*, ſo familiar to the Antient Greek Phyſicians. Moreover they obſerve not any time in purging, and know not what the Criſis is: though they underſtand the benefit of Sweats in diſtempers, and do highly applaud the uſe of Sudorificks.

In their Remedies they do uſe Minerals and Simples, and the *Europeans* have made known the *Quinquina* unto them. In general all their Remedies are very hot; and they uſe not any inward Refreshment: but they bath themſelves in Fevers, and in all ſorts of diſeaſes. It ſeems that whatever concentrates or augments the natural heat, is beneficial to them.

Their ſick do nourish themſelves only with boiled Rice, which they do make extremely liquid: the *Portugueſe* of the *Indies* do call it *canga*. Meat-Broths are mortal at *Siam*, becauſe they too much relax the Stomach: and when their Patients are in a condition to eat any thing ſolid, they give them Pigs fleſh preferable to any other.

The Diet of the ſick *Siammeſes*.

They do not underſtand Chymiſtry, although they paſſionately affect it; and that ſeveral amongſt them do boaſt of poſſeſſing the moſt profound ſecrets thereof. *Siam*, like all the reſt of the Eaſt, is full of two ſorts of perſons upon this account, Impoſtors and Fools. The late King of *Siam*, the Father of the preſent Prince, ſpent two Millions, a great ſum for his Country, in the vain reſearch of the Philoſophers Stone: and the *Chineſes*, reputed ſo wiſe, have for three or four thouſand years had the folly of ſeeking out an Univerſal Remedy, by which they hope to exempt themſelves from the neceſſity of dying. And as amongſt us there are ſome fooliſh Traditions concerning ſome rare perſons that are reported to have made Gold, or to have lived ſome Ages; there are ſome very ſtrongly eſtabliſhed amongſt the *Chineſes*, the *Siammeſes*, and the other Orientals, concerning thoſe that know how to render themſelves immortal, either abſolutely, or in ſuch a manner, that they can die no otherwiſe than of a violent death. Wherefore it is ſuppoſed, that ſome have withdrawn themſelves from the ſight of men, either to enjoy a free and peaceable Immortality, or to ſecure themſelves from all foreign force, which might deprive them of their life, which no diſtemper could do. They relate wonders concerning the knowledge of theſe pretended Immortals, and it is no matter of aſtoniſhment that they think themſelves capable of forcing Nature in ſeveral things, ſince they imagine that they have had the Art of freeing themſelves from Death.

Their Ignorance in Chymiſtry, and their Fables about this matter.

C H A P. XI.

What the Siameses do know of the Mathematics.

The great Heat of *Siam*, repugnant to all application of Mind.

THE quick and clear Imagination of the *Siameses* should seem more proper for the Mathematics, than the other Studies, if it did not soon weary them; but they cannot follow a long thread of Ratiocinations, of which they do foresee neither the end nor the profit. And it must be confessed for their Excuse, that all application of Mind is so laborious in a Climate so hot as theirs, that the very *Europeans* could hardly study there, what desire soever they might have thereunto.

The Ignorance of the *Siameses* touching the principal parts of Mathematics.

The *Siameses* do therefore know nothing in Geometry or Mechanics, because they can be absolutely without them: And Astronomy concerns them only as far as they conceive it may be assitant to Divination. They know only some Practical part thereof, the Reasons of which they disdain to penetrate; but of which they make use in the Horoscopes of particular Persons, and in the Composition of their Almanac, which, as it were, is a general Horoscope.

Of the *Siamese* Calendar, and why they have two Epochs.

It appears that they have twice caused their Calendar to be reformed by able Astronomers, who, to supply the Astronomical Tables, have taken two arbitrary Epochs, but yet remarkable for some rare Conjunction of the Planets. Having once established certain Numbers upon these Observations, they by the means of several Additions, Subtractions, Multiplications and Divisions, have given for the following Years the secret of finding the place of the Planets, almost as we find the Epoch of every Year, by adding eleven to the Epoch of the Year foregoing.

The most Modern is evidently Arbitrary.

The most Modern of the two *Siamese Epochs*, is referred to the Year of Grace 638. I gave to Mr. *Cassini*, Director of the Observatory at *Paris*, the *Siamese* Method of finding the place of the Sun and Moon by a Calculation, the ground of which is taken from this Epoch. And the singular Merit which Mr. *Cassini* has had of unfolding a thing so difficult, and penetrating the Reasons thereof, will doubtless be admired by all the Learned. Now as this Epoch is visibly the ground only of an Astronomical Calculation, and has been chosen rather than another, only because it appear'd more commodious to Calculation than another, it is evident that we must thence conclude nothing which respects the *Siamese* History; nor imagine that the Year 638, has been more Famous amongst them than another for any Event, from which they have thought fit to begin to compute their Years, as we compute ours, from the Birth of the Saviour of the World.

The most Ancient also appears Arbitrary.

By the same Reason I am persuaded, that their most Ancient Epoch, from which in this Year 1689, they compute 2233 Years, has not been remarkable at *Siam* for any thing worthy of Memory, and that it proves not that the Kingdom of *Siam* is of that Antiquity. It is purely Astronomical, and serves as a Foundation to another way of calculating the places of the Planets, which they have relinquished for that new Method which I have given to Mr. *Cassini*. Some person may discover to them the Mistakes, where in process of time this ancient Method must fall; as in time we have found out the Errors of the Reformation of the Calendar made by the Order of *Julius Caesar*.

And is not taken from the death of *Sommona Codom*.

The Historical Memoirs of the *Siameses* re-ascending, as I have remark'd in the beginning, to 900 Years, or thereabouts, it is not necessary to seek the Foundation of their Kingdom in the 545th Year before the Birth of Jesus Christ; nor to suppose that from this time they have enjoyed a Succession of Kings, which they themselves are absolutely ignorant of. And tho' the *Siameses* do vulgarly report, that this first Epoch, from which they compute, as I have said, 2233 Years, is that of the death of their *Sommona-Codom*; and altho' it refers almost to the time in which *Pythagoras* liv'd, who has sowed in the West the Doctrine of the *Metempsychosis*, which he had learnt from the *Egyptians*, yet it is certain

certain that the *Siameses* have not any Memoirs of the time in which their *Sommona-Codom* might have lived: And I cannot persuade my self that their *Sommona-Codom* could be *Pythagoras*, who was not in the *East*, nor that their ancient *Epocha* is other than *Astronomical* and *Arbitrary*, no more than their Modern *Epocha*.

But if the *Siameses* do still make use thereof in their Dates, after having relinquish'd it in their *Astronomical* Calculations, it is because that in things of *Style* they do not easily alter the Usages unto which they are accustomed; and yet they cease not to date sometimes with respect to that modern *Epocha* which they have taken, as I have said, from the Year of our Lord 638. But their first Month is always the Moon of *November* or *December*, in which they depart not from the ancient *Style*, even then when they date the Year according to their new *Style*; tho' the first Month of the Year, according to this new *Style*, be the fifth or sixth of the old *Style*.

The Variety of *Style* in their Dates.

This, in few words, is the whole Skill of the *Siameses* in *Astronomy*. Moreover, they understand nothing of the true System of the World, because they know nothing by Reason. They believe therefore, like all the *East*, that the Eclipses are caused by some Dragon, which devours the Sun and Moon (perhaps by reason of the Astronomer's metaphorical way of speaking, that the Eclipses are made in the Head and Tail of the Dragon:) And they make a great noise, with Fire-shovels and Kettles, to scare and drive away this pernicious Animal, and to deliver those beauteous Planets. They believe the Earth Four-square and of vast Extent, on which the Arch of Heaven rests at its extremities, as if it was one of our Glass-Bells with which we cover some of our Plants in our Gardens. They assert, that the Earth is divided into four habitable parts of the World, so separated one from the other by Seas, that they are, as it were, four different Worlds. In the middle of these four Worlds, they suppose an exceeding high Pyramidal Mountain with four equal sides, called, *Caou pra Soumene* (*Caou* signifies, a Mountain, and to Mount:) and from the Surface of the Earth, or the Sea, to the top of this Mountain, which, as they say, touches the Stars, they compute 84000 *Jods*, and every *Jod* contains about 8000 Fathoms. They reckon as many *Jods* from the Surface of the Sea to the Foundations of the Mountain; and they likewise reckon 84000 *Jods* extent of Sea from each of the four sides of this Mountain to every of the four Worlds which I have mentioned. Now our World, which they call *Tchiampion*, lies, as they report, to the South of this Mountain, and the Sun, Moon and Stars do incessantly turn round it; and it is that, which according to them, makes the Day and Night. At the top of this Mountain is a Heaven, which they call *Intratiracha*, which is surmounted by the Heaven of Angels. This Sample, which is all I know thereof, will suffice to demonstrate their Grossness; and if it does not exactly accord to what others have writ before me concerning this matter, we must not more admire the variety of the *Siamese* Opinions in a thing they understand not, than the contrariety of our Systems in *Astronomy*, which we pretend to understand.

What the *Siameses* do think of the System of the World.

The extreme Superstition of the *Indians* is therefore a very natural Consequence of their profound Ignorance; but for their Excuse, some People, more illuminated than them, have not been less Superstitious. Have not the *Greeks*, and after them the *Romans*, believed in Judiciary Astrology, Augurs, Prefages, and all sorts of Arts invented under pretence of Divining and Predicting? They thought that it was the goodness of the Gods, to bestow on Men some Succors to penetrate Futurities; and the words *Divination* and *Divine* are the same word in their Origine, because that according to the ancient *Pagans*, the Art of Divining was only an Art to consult the Deities. The *Siameses* are also of opinion, that there is an Art of Prophecy, as there is one of restoring Health to the Sick: And when the King of *Siam*'s Soothsayers are mistaken, he causes them to be bastinado'd, not as Impostors, but as negligent persons; as he commands his Physicians to be cudgell'd, when the Remedies they give him, perform not the Effect which is thereby promised.

The *Indians* are Superstitious proportionably to their extreme Ignorance.

The Authority of Sooth-sayers over the *Siamefes*.

This Prince, no more than his Subjects, undertakes no Affair, nor Expedition, till his Diviners, which are all *Brames* or *Peguins*, have fix'd him an hour prosperously to set upon it. He stirs not out of his House, or if he be gone, he enters not again, so long as his Diviners prohibit him. *Sunday* seems to him more lucky than the other days, because that in his Tongue he has preserv'd the name of the *Sun's-day*. He believes the Increase of the Moon more lucky than the Decrease; and besides this, the Almanac which he causes Annually to be made by a *Brame* Astrologer, denotes to him and his Subjects, the lucky or unlucky days for most of the things they used to do: A Folly which is perhaps too much tolerated amongst the Christians, witness the Almanac of *Milan*, to which so many persons do now give such a blind Belief.

And Prefages.

The *Siamefes* do take the Howlings of wild Beasts, and the Cryes of Stags and Apes, for an ill *Omen*; as several persons amongst us are frighten'd with the Barking of the Dogs in the Night. A Serpent which crosses the way, the Thunderbolt which falls on a House, any thing that falls as it were of itself, and without any apparent Cause, are Subjects of dread to the *Siamefes*, and the reasons of laying aside or setting upon an Affair, how important and pressing soever it be. One of the ways they make use of to foretell things to come, and which is common to all the Orientals, is to perform some superstitious Ceremonies, then to go into the City, and to take for an Oracle about what they desire to know, the first words which they hear accidentally spoken in the Streets, or in the Houses. I could learn no more thereof, by reason that the Christian Interpreters, which I made use of, look'd upon these things with Horror, as Witchcraft and Compacts with the *Demon*, altho' it be very possible that they are only Fooleries full of Credulity and Ignorance. The ancient *Franks*, by a like Superstition, consulted in their Wars the first words which they heard sung in the Church, at their entering thereinto. At this very day several persons have a Superstitious Belief in certain Herbs which they gather the Evening of *St. John*, from whence is risen this Proverb, To use or employ all the Herbs of *St. John*, that is, the utmost skill in an Affair: And amongst the *Italians*, there are some, who, after having wash'd their Feet in Wine on *St. John's* Eve, do throw the Wine out at Window, and so stand afterwards to hear those that pass along the Street, taking for a certain Augury on what they desire to know, the first word they hear spoken.

The *Indians* accused of Sorcery, and why.

But that which has rais'd the Reputation of great Sorcerers amongst the *Indians*, is principally the continual Conjurations which they use to drive away the evil Spirits with, and attract the good. They pretend to have some *Talismans*, or Characters which they call *Cata*, to accomplish whatever they please; as to kill, or to render invulnerable; and to impose Silence on Persons and Dogs, when they would commit a wicked Action, and not be discovered. If they prepare a Medicine, they will fasten to the brim of the Vessel several Papers, wherein they will write some mysterious words, to hinder the *Pepparations* from carrying away the virtue of the Remedy with the steam. These *Pepparations* are in their Opinion some Spirits diffused in the Air, of whom they believe, amongst other things, that they do first enjoy all the Maidens; and that they do them that pretended hurt, which is renewed every Month. In a Storm at Sea, they will fasten to all the Tackle such like written Papers, which they believe proper to assuage the Winds.

Superstitions for Women in Child-bed.

The superstitions which they use towards Women in Child-bed, appear not less ridiculous, although they be founded perhaps on some benefit for health. They believe that Women in Child-bed have need of being purified: whether that the *Jews*, spread throughout the Earth, have sowed this Tradition amongst several Nations, or that the people of hot Countries are more easily prejudiced than those of cold Countries with the natural impurities of Women. The *Siamefes* keep the Women in Child-bed before a continual and great fire for a month, where they turn them sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other. The smoak does greatly incommode them, and passes slowly through an Aperture, which they make in the roof of their houses. The *Peguins* do put their Wives on a kind of Bambou-grate, very high, with fire underneath; but they

they keep them thus no more than four or five days. At the up-rising, the one and the other return thanks to the Fire for having purified their Wives; and in the Entertainment which they give on this occasion to their Friends, they eat nothing which they have not first offered to the Fire, leaving it some time near it. During the whole time of lying in Child-bed, the Women neither eat nor drink any thing that is hot hot: and I understand that our *Midwives* forbid their Women also to drink any thing cold.

But the most speedy and most sensible effects of the pretended Divinations of the *Indians* are in the use of certain *Philtres*, which are only natural drinks. The *Indies* do produce some *Simples*, the kinds, force, or use of which we understand not. The Amorous *Philtres*, or Love-potions, are those which debilitate the Imagination, and make a Man to become a Child; so that after this it is easy to govern him. My domesticks assur'd me that they had seen a man at *Batavia*, of whom it was reported that his wife had render'd him senseless after this manner. Other drinks do cause other effects. The Relations are full of those which the women of *Goa* frequently give their Husbands; and which render them so stupid for 24 hours, that they can then be unfaithful to them in their presence. *Opium*, or the quintessence of Poppies, causes such different effects, that it procures sleep, or watchfulness, as it is variously prepared. The *Indians* going to Battel, do take thereof to inspire them with courage, or rather with fury. They then run headlong upon the Enemy like wild Boars: It is dangerous to attend them, but one may avoid them by turning out of the way, for they go forwards. Moreover, the effect of *Opium* lasts only some hours, after which they relapse not only into their natural cowardice, but into a faintness, which leaves them but little action for their defence. And such were those *Macassers*, which had conspired against the King of *Siam*, some months before the Kings Ambassadors arrived there.

The *Siamers* have likewise some Distempers, the symptoms of which are sometimes so strange, that they think the cause thereof can be attributed only to Witchcraft. But besides these extraordinary cases, their Physicians do almost continually accuse the greater Energy of the Spirits, with the inefficaciousness of their Remedies; and they do herein play such subtle juggling tricks, or rather they deal with persons so credulous, that whilst we were at *Siam*, they made a sick man believe, that he had voided a Deers skin with a Medicine, and that he must have swallowed this Deers skin by a Magical effect, and without perceiving it. This is what I judged necessary to relate concerning the *Siamers* Superstitions, of which every one may judge as he pleases: for it on the one hand I have seen nothing which obliges me to accuse them of Sorcery; on the other hand I am not concern'd to justify them entirely.

But before we quit this subject I will here add one thing, which may be attributed at your pleasure, to Superstition or Vanity: One day when the King's Ambassadors were saluted by the real or supposed Ambassadors, from *Patana*, *Camboja*, and some other neighbouring Courts, the Ambassadors of some of the several Nations which are at *Siam*, were also at this Visit: and among the rest there were two, who said that the City of their Origine, the name of which I have forgot, remained no more: but that it had been so considerable, that it was impossible to go round it in three Months. I smil'd thereat as at a groundless folly: and in a few days after Mr. de la Mare the Engineer, whom Mr. de Chamont had left at *Siam*, informed me, that when by the King of *Siam*'s order he had been at *Ligor* to take the draught thereof, the Governour would not permit him to go round it under two days, though he could have done it in less than an hour. Let us proceed to the study of the last part of the Mathematicks.

Philtres
look'd upon
as the effect
of Magic.

Distempers
considered as
the Effects of
Magic.

Superstition
or Vanity
touching the
walls of
Cities.

C H A P. XII.

Concerning Musick, and the Exercifes of the Body.

The *Siameses*
have no Art
in Singing.

Musick is not better understood at *Siam*, than Geometry and Astronomy. They make Airs by Fancy, and know not how to prick them by Notes. They have neither Cadence, nor quaver no more than the *Castilians*: but they sometimes sing like us without words, which the *Castilians* think very strange; and in the stead of words, they only say *noi, noi*, as we do say *lan-la-lari*. I have not remark'd one single Air, whose measure was triple, whereas those are without comparison the most familiar to the *Spaniards*. The King of *Siam*, without shewing himself, heard several Airs of our *Opera* on the Violin, and it was told us that he did not think them of a movement grave enough: Nevertheless the *Siameses* have nothing very grave in their Songs; and whatever they play on their Instruments, even in their Kings march, is very brisk.

They have not
several parts
in their Con-
ferts.

They understand not more than the *Chineses* the diversity of Parts in composition; they understand not the Variety of the Parts; they do all sing Unisons. Their Instruments are not well chose, and it must be thought that those, wherein there appears any knowledge of Musick, have them brought from other parts.

Their Instru-
ments: the Re-
beck, Hoboy,
Bafons.

They have very ugly little *Rebecks* or Violins with three strings, which they call *Tre*, and some very shrill Hoboys which they call *Pi*, and the *Spaniards* *Chirimias*. They play not ill, and accompany them with the noise of certain copper Bafons, on each of which a man strikes a blow with a short stick, at certain times in each measure. These Bafons are hung up by a string, each has a Pole laid a-crofs upon two upright Forks: the one is called *Schoung-rehang*, and it is thinner, broader, and of a graver sound than the other, which they call *Cong*.

* The Ear
guides them,
no person
beating the
Time.

To this they add two sorts of Drum, the *Tlounpoupan*, and the *Tapon*. The wood of the *Tlounpoupan* is about the size of our Timbrels; but it is cover'd with skin on both sides like a true Drum, and on each side of the wood hangs a leaden ball to a string. Besides this the wood of the *Tlounpoupan* is run through with a stick which serves as a handle, by which it is held. They rowl it between their hands like a Chocolate-stick, only that the Chocolate-stick is held inverted, and the *Tlounpoupan* strait: and by this motion which I have described, the Leaden Balls which hang down from each side of the *Tlounpoupan*, do strike on each side upon the two Skins.

The *Tapon*.

The *Tapon* resembles a Barrel; they carry it before them, hung to the Neck by a Rope; and they beat it on the two Skins with each fist.

They have another Instrument composed of, which they call *Patcong*. The are all placed successively every one on a short stick, and planted perpendicular on a demi-circumference of Wood, like to the felleys of a little Wheel of a Coach. He that plays on this Instrument is seated at the center crofs-legg'd; and he strikes the with two sticks, one of which he holds in his right hand, and the other in his left. To me it seems that this Instrument had only a fifth redoubled in extent, but certainly there was not any half notes, nor any thing to stop the sound of one, when another was struck.

The Confort
which follows
the King in his
Marches.

The March which they sounded at the entrance of the Kings Ambassadors, was a confused noise with all these Instruments together: The like is sounded in attending on the King of *Siam*; and this noise, as fantastical and odd as it is, has nothing unpleasant, especially on the River.

Instruments
accompanying
the Voice.

They sometimes accompany the Voice with two short sticks, which they call *Crab*, and which they strike one against the other; and he that sings thus, is called *Tchang cap*. They hire him at Weddings with several of those Instruments I have mentioned. The people do also accompany the Voice in the Evening into

into the Courts of the Houses, with a kind of Drum called *Teng*. They hold it with the Left hand, and strike it continually with the Right hand. 'Tis an earthen Bottle without a bottom, and which instead thereof is covered with a Skin tyed to the Neck with Ropes.

The *Siamers* do extremely love our Trumpets, theirs are small and harsh, Trumpets they call them *Tres*; and besides this they have true Drums, which they call *Clong*. and Drums. But tho' their Drums be lesser than ours, they carry them not hanging upon their Shoulder: They set them upon one of the Skins, and they beat them on the other, themselves sitting cross-leg'd before their Drums. They do also make use of this sort of Drum to accompany the Voice, but they seldom sing with these Drums but to dance.

On the day of the first Audience of the King's Ambassadors, there were in the innermost Court of the Palace an hundred Men lying prostrate, some holding for show those ugly little Trumpets which they sounded not, and which I suspect to be of wood, and the others having before them every one a little Drum without beating it. They have false ones to make a show.

By all that I have said, it appears that in some cases the Mathematics are as much neglected at *Siam*, as the other Sciences. They have Exercises of the Body in no more Esteem than those of the Mind. They know not what the Art of Riding the Great Horse is: Arms they have none, except the King gives them some; and they cannot purchase any, till he has given them some. They exercise them only by the Order of this Prince. They never fire the Musquet standing, no not in War: To discharge it, they place one Knee on the ground, and frequently proceed to sit on their Heel, stretching forward the other Leg, which they have not bent. They hardly know to march, or keep themselves on their Feet with a good grace. They never stretch out their Hams well, because they are accustomed to keep them bended. The *French* taught them how to stand to their Arms, and till the arrival of the King's Ships at *Siam*, their Sentinels themselves sat upon the ground. So far are they from running Races, purely for Recreation sake, that they never walk abroad. The heat of the Climate causes a great Consumption in them. Wrestling, and Fifty-cuffs, are the Jugler's Trade. The running of *Balons* is therefore their sole Exercise. The Oar and *Pagaye* are in this Country the Trade of all the People from four or five years old. They can Row three days and three nights almost without resting, altho' they cannot undergo any other Work. The Exercises of the Body.

C H A P. XIII.

Of the Arts exercised by the Siamers.

They have no Companies of Trades, and the Arts flourish not amongst them, not only by reason of their natural sluggishness, but much more by reason of the Government under which they live. There being no security why they are bad Artificers, and reason for the wealth of particular persons, but to conceal it well every one there continues in so great a simplicity, that most of the Arts are not necessary to them, and that the Workmen cannot meet with the just value of the Works on which they would bestow a great deal of Expence and Labour. Moreover, as every particular Person does Annually owe six Months service to the King, and that frequently he is not discharged for six Months, there is no Person in this Country that dares to distinguish himself in any Art, for fear of being forced to work gratis all his life for the service of this Prince. And because that they are indifferently employ'd in these Works, every one applies himself to know how to do a little of all, to avoid the Bastinado; but none would do too well, because that Servitude is the reward of Ingenuity. They neither know, nor desire to know how to do otherwise, than what they have always done. 'Tis no matter to them to have 500 Workmen, for several Months, upon what a few

Europeans, well paid, would finish in a few days. If any Stranger gives them any direction, or any Machine, they forget it: so soon as their Prince forgets it. Wherefore no *European* offers his service to an *Indian* Prince, who is not receiv'd, as I may say, with open Arms. How little Merit soever he may have, he always has more than the natural *Indians*; and not only for the Mechanic Arts, but for the Sea, and for Commerce, to which they are much more affected. The Inconvenience is, that the *Indian* Kings do well know the Secret, either of enriching a Stranger only with hopes, or of detaining him amongst them if they have really enrich'd him. Nothing is so magnificent as the Grants which the great *Mogul* gives: But is there found one *European* that has carry'd away much wealth out of his Service?

What Arts
they exercise.

To return to the Industry of the *Siamese*, the Arts which they understand are these. They are reasonable good Joyners, and because they have no Nails, they very well understand how to fasten pieces together. They pretend to Sculpture, but grossly perform it. The Statues of their Temples are very ill made. They know how to burn Brick, and make excellent Ciments, and are not unskill'd in Masonry. Nevertheless their Brick Buildings do not last, for want of Foundations: they do not make any, even in their Fortifications. They have no melted Crystal, nor Glass; and it is one of the things they most esteem. The King of *Siam* was extremely pleas'd with those Fossil-cut Glasses, which multiply an Object; and he demanded entire Windows with the same property.

The Windows
of the *Chinese*.

The Windows of the *Chinese* are compos'd with Threads of Glass as big as Straws, laid one by another, and glued at the ends to Paper, as we folder the Quarries of Glass into our Window-frames. They do frequently put some Paintings on these sorts of Glasses, and with these Glasses thus painted, they sometimes make Pannels of Screens, behind which they love to set some lights, because they extremely admire the Fancy of Illuminations.

How the *Siamese*
do use
Metals.

The *Siamese* do know to melt Metals, and cast some Works in Molds. They do cover their Idols, which are sometimes enormous masses of Brick and Lime, with a very thin Plate either of Gold or Silver, or Copper. I have in my possession a little *Sommona-Codem*, which is thus cover'd over with a Copper Plate gilded, and which is yet full of the Ciment, which served as the Model. With such a Plate of Gold or Silver they cover certain of their King's Moveables, and the Iron hilt of the Sabres and Daggers, which he presents to some of his Officers, and sometimes to Strangers. They are not wholly ignorant of the Goldsmith's Trade; but they neither know how to polish, nor to set precious Stones.

How they
write on a
Leaf of Gold.

They are excellent Gilders, and know very well how to beat the Gold. As often as the King of *Siam* writes to another King, he does it upon a Leaf of that Metal as thin as a Leaf of Paper. The Letters are imprinted thereon with a blunt Poinson or Bodkin, like those with which we write in our Table-Books.

They are bad
Smiths, and no
Tanners.

They make use of Iron only as it is Cast, by reason they are bad Forge-men; their Horses are not shod, and have commonly Stirrups of Rope, and very paltry Snaffles. They have no better Saddles, the Art of Tanning and preparing Skins, being absolutely unknown at *Siam*.

They make
little Linens,
and no Stuffs.

They make little Cotton-Cloth, and that very coarse, with a very nasty Painting, and only in the Metropolis. They make no Stuffs, neither of Silk, nor Wooll, nor any Tapestry-work: Wooll is here very scarce. They understand Embroidery, and their Designs please.

The painting
of the *Siamese*
and *Chinese*.

In one of their Temples I saw a very pleasant Picture in *Fresco*, the Colours of which were lively. There was no Ordonance, and it made us to remember our ancient Tapestries: 'Twas not certainly the work of a *Siamese* hand.

The *Siamese* and *Chinese* know not how to paint in Oil; and, moreover, they are bad Painters. Their Fancy is to flight and disesteem whatever is after Nature only. To them it seems that an exact Imitation is too easie, wherefore they

they overdo every thing. They will therefore have Extravagancies in Painting, as we will have Wonders in Poetry. They represent Trees, Flowers, Birds, and other Animals, which never were. They sometimes give unto Men impossible Proportions, and the Secret is, to give to all these things a Facility, which may make them to appear Natural. This is what concerns the Arts.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Traffic amongst the Siameses.

THE most general Professions at *Siam* are Fishing for the common People, and Merchandize for all those that have wherewith to follow it. I say all, not excepting their King himself. But the Foreign Trade being reserved almost entire to the King, the Home Trade is so inconsiderable, that it is impossible to raise any competent Fortune thereby. That simplicity of Manners, which makes the *Siameses* to let go most of the Arts, makes them also to flight most of the Commodities which are necessary to the *Europeans*; yet see how the *Siameses* carry on their Commerce.

In their Loans, a third person, whosoever he be, writes down the Promise, and this sufficeth them in Justice, because it is determined against the word of the Debtor who denies, upon the double Testimony of him that produces the Promise, and of him that writ. It is necessary only that it appear by the viewing of the Writing, that it is not the Creditor that writ the Promise.

Moreover, they sign no Writings, neither do they apply any Seal to private Writings. 'Tis only the Magistrates that have a Seal, that is properly a Seal, which the King gives them as an Instrument of their Offices. Particular Persons, instead of a Signature, do put a single Cross; and tho' this kind of Signature be practised by all, yet every one knows the Cross which is under his own hand; and it is very rare, they say, that any one is of a Reputation so bad as to disown it in Justice. In a word, I shall transiently declare, that we must not search out any Mystery in that they sign with a Cross: 'Tis amongst them only a kind of Flourish which they have preferred before any other, probably because it is more plain.

I have said, that they endow the Virgins at their marrying; and that the Portion is paid to the Husband in presence of the Parents, but without any Writing. I have said also, that they make no Will, and that before their death they dispose of their Estate with their own hand, and to whom they please, and that after this manner Custom disposes of their Inheritance. They Trade little with Immoveables, no person amongst them thinking it safe to purchase Land of another; the Prince gives, or sells thereof, to whoever would have it. But the real Property remaining always in him, is the reason that none in this Country does care to purchase much Land, nor to meliorate it, for fear of exciting a desire of it in one more powerful than himself. And thus needing no Writings of long continuance, they have not thought fit to have any Notaries.

As to the small Trades, they are almost all of so little Consequence, and Fidelity is there so great, that in the Bazars or Markets the Seller counts not the Money which he receives, nor the Buyer the Commodity, which he purchases by Tale. They were scandaliz'd to see the *French* buy the least things with more Caution.

The Hour of the Market is from Five in the Evening to Eight or Nine. They use no Ell, by reason they buy Mullins, and other Linnens, all in whole Pieces. They are very poor and miserable in this Country, when they buy Cloth.

They have the Fathom, which they use in several things, and especially in measuring the Roads.

The *Coco* serves the *Siamese* as Measure for Grains and Liquors.

Money serves them for Weights.

Their Monies.

The Chinese Money.

Cloth by *Ken*, a term which signifies the *Elbow* and *Cubit* both, and for these they measure with their Arm, and not with any sort of Ell.

Nevertheless they have their Fathom, which equals the *French Toise* within an Inch. They use it in Buildings, in surveying of Land, and perhaps in other things; and especially in measuring the Roads, or Channels, through which the King generally passes. Thus from *Siam* to *Lozvo*, every Mile is marked with a Post, on which they have writ the number of the Mile. The same thing is observ'd in the Country of the great *Mogul*, where *Bernier* reports, that they mark the *Koffes*, or Half-miles, with Tourrettes, or little Pyramids, and every one knows that the *Romans* denoted their Miles with Stones.

The *Coco* serves as a Measure for Grain and Liquors in this manner. As all the *Coco's* are naturally unequal, they measure the Capacity thereof by those little Shells called *Coris*, which serve for small Money at *Siam*, and which are not sensibly greater one than the other. There is therefore such a *Coco* which contains a thousand *Coris*, as some have informed me, such an one which contains five hundred, and such another more or less. To measure Corn they have a kind of *Bushel*, called *Sat* in the *Siamese*, which is made only with interlaced *Bamboo*; and to measure Liquors, they have a Pitcher called *Canan* in *Siamese*, *Choup* in *Portuguese*; and it is according to these sorts of Measures, that they make their Markets. But for want of Policy, and a *Standard*, according to which the Measures should legally be regulated, the Buyer accepts them only after having measur'd them with his *Coco*, the Capacity of which he knows by the *Coris*; and he uses either Water, or Rice, according as he would measure either the *Canan* or the *Sat* with his *Coco*. In a word, the quarter of the *Canan* is called *Leeng*, and forty *Sats* do make the *Seste*, and forty *Seste's* the *Cobi*. It is impossible to declare the resemblance which Measures so little exact have with ours. I have said moreover, that a Pound of Rice a day sufficeth a Man, and that it is worth no more than a Farthing. Mr. *Gervaise* says, that the *Seste* of Rice is reckon'd to weigh an hundred *Catis*, that is to say, two hundred twenty and five of our Pounds.

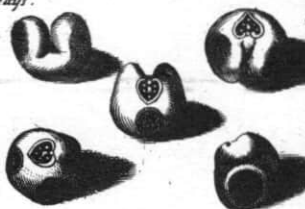
They are not more exact as to their Weights, in general they call them *Ding*; and the pieces of their Money are more nice and true, and almost the only ones which they use, altho' their Money be frequently false or light. Some inform'd me, as a thing very remarkable, that the *Siamese* sold coarse Silver by weight, because they had seen in the Market that Commodity in one of the Scales, and the silver Money which serv'd as a Weight in the other. The same Names do therefore signify the Weights and Money both.

Their silver Coins are all of the same Figure, and struck with the same Stamps, only some are smaller than others. They are of the Figure of a little Cylinder or Roll very short, and bowed quite at the middle, so that both ends of the Cylinder touch'd one another. Their Stamps (for they have two on each piece, struck one at the side of the other in the middle of the Cylinder, and not at the ends) do represent nothing that we knew, and they have not explain'd them to me. The proportion of their Money to ours is, that their *Ticals*, which weighs no more than half a Crown, is yet worth three shillings and three half-pence. I give the Figure and Size thereof, and at the end of this Work you will find their Measures for the Lengths, as well as their Coins and their Weights. They have no Gold, nor Copper-Money. Gold is a Merchandize amongst them, and is twelve times the value of Silver, the purity being suppos'd equal in both the Metals.

Neither Gold nor Silver are Monies at *China*: They cut these Metals into ill-shaped pieces, with which they pay for other Commodities; and for this purpose it is necessary, that they always have a pair of Gold Scales, and a Touchstone in their hand. Their pair of Gold Scales is a little *Roman Balance*; but amongst them there is such cheap living, that for ordinary Provisions their own Money, which is only Copper, sufficeth them. They thred it in a certain number on a Cord, for it is perforated in the middle, and they count by strings, and not by pieces.

The

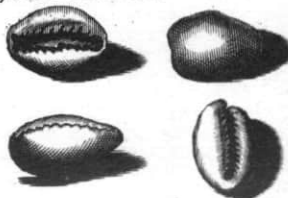
A Tical in its natural size view'd several ways.



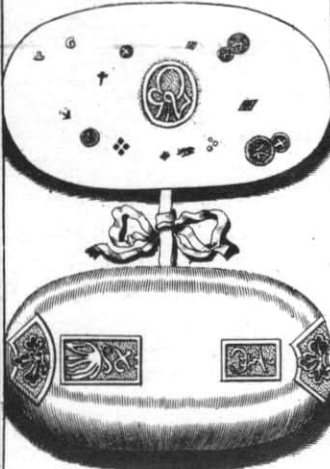
The Stamp of the Tical large
grain at



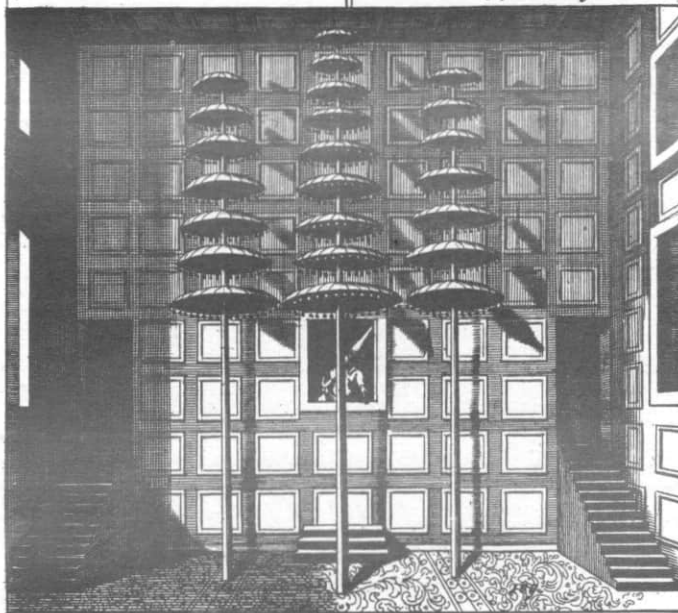
Cavi-a shell serving for Mony seen severall ways in its natural size



The Reverse Figure of y^e Coupan & Gold Coin of Japan seen on both sides



These strokes are not shadows: but are made in the Mony to justify the weight thereof.



A Prospect of the Hall of Audience in the Pallace of Siam.

The *Japaneſes* have a flat Gold Coin ſomewhat longer than broad, and round like an oval. I give exactly the ſize and figure thereof. It is ſtruck at ſeveral ſtamps with hatchings: Its weight is four Drams and a half, and twelve grains, and is at leaſt Twenty three Carrats, as far as we can judge thereof without melting it. It is called *Coupan*, and its value is vulgarly eſteemed Ten Crowns a piece.

The *Coupan* the Gold Money of *Japan*.

The baſe Coin at *Siam* is no other than thoſe little Shells I have already mentioned, and of which I have likewiſe given the ſize and figure. The *Europeans* which are at *Siam* do call them *Coris*, and the *Siamſes* *Bia*. They fiſh them up abundantly at the *Maldives* Iſlands, and ſometimes at the *Philippine* Iſles, but in very little quantity, as ſome have informed me. Nevertheleſs *Navarrete* in his *Diſcourſe* of China, pag. 62, ſpeaks thus concerning the *Coris*, which he calls *Seguejes*. 'Tis imported, ſaith he, from the coaſt of India and Manille: They are innumerable at the Iſle of Luban, which is one of the *Philippines*. And a little after he ſubjoyns, the *Seguejes* are brought from the Iſles of *Baldovia*, which are the *Maldivas*.

Shells, the baſe Money of *Siam*.

'Tis not eaſie to ſay how far the uſe of this Money extends it ſelf. It is current throughout India, and almoſt over all the coaſts of *Africa*; and ſome have informed me that it is received in ſome places of *Hungary*; but I can hardly believe it, by reaſon I ſee it not worth the trouble to carry it thither. It breaks much in the uſe; and as there is leſs of it, it is more worth in reſpect to the Silver Money; as likewiſe it lowers its price when there arrives any conſiderable cargo by any Ship: for it is a kind of Merchandiſe. The ordinary price at *Siam* is that a *Fonan*, or the eighth part of a *Fical*, is worth eight hundred *Coris*, or that 7 or 800 *Coris* are hardly worth a Penny: The lowneſs of Money, being a certain ſign of a good Market, or rather of the cheapneſs of Commodities.

How much the uſe of this Money is extended.

CHAP. XV.

A Character of the Siamſes in general.

As eaſineſs of living, conſiſts in the reaſonable price of things neceſſary for life, and as good manners are more eaſily preferred in a moderate eaſineſs, than in a Poverty attended with too much labour, or in an over-abundant Idleneſs, it may be affirm'd that the *Siamſes* are good men. Vices are deſteſtable amongſt them, and they excuſe them not as witty conceits, nor as ſublimity of mind. A *Siamſe* never ſo little above the reſuſe of the people, is ſo far from making himſelf drunk, that he accounts it a ſhame to drink *Arak*.

The *Siamſes* are good People.

Adultery is rare at *Siam*, not ſo much becauſe the Huſband has the power of doing himſelf Juſtice over his Wife, (that is to ſay, to kill her if he finds her in a palpable offence, or to ſell her, if he can convict her of Infidelity) as becauſe the Women are not corrupted by Idleneſs (for it is they that maintain the men by their Labour) nor by the Luxury of the Table or of Cloaths, nor by Gaming, nor by Shows. The *Siamſe* Women do not play: they receive no Viſits from men; and Plays are very rare at *Siam*, and have no appointed days, nor certain price, nor publick Theater. It muſt not however be thought that all Marriages are chaſte, but at leaſt any other Love more immoderate, than that of the Wives is, they ſay, without example.

Adultery is rare at *Siam*.

Jealouſie is amongſt them only a meer opinion of Glory, which is greater in thoſe, that are moſt highly advanced in Dignity. The Wives of the People managing all the Trade do enjoy a perfect Liberty. Thoſe of the Nobles are very reſerved, and ſtir not abroad but ſeldom, either upon ſome Family viſit, or to go to the *Pagodes*. But when they go out, they go with their face uncovered; even when they go on foot; and ſometimes it is hard to diſtinguiſh them from the Women-ſlaves which accompany them. In a word, they not only find nothing auſtere in the conſtraint under which they live, but they place their

The Jealouſie of the *Siamſes* to their Wives.

glory therein. They look upon a greater liberty as a shame : and would think themselves slighted and contemned by a Husband that would permit it them: They are jealous for them as much as they are themselves.

The Glory of
the Asiatick
Women.

There is not a virtuous Woman in *Asia*, who in time of War chuses not rather that her Husband should kill her, than that he should suffer her to fall under the power of the Enemies. *Tacitus* in the Twelfth Book of his *Annals*, gives an example thereof in *Zenobia*, the wife of *Rhadamistus*. The Husbands themselves do think it the most shameful thing in the world to them; that their Wives should fall into the Enemies hands; and when this happens, the greatest affront that can be done them, is not to restore them their Wives. But tho the Women of *Asia* be capable of sacrificing their life to their glory, there ceases not to be some amongst them, who take secret pleasures when they can, and who hazard their glory and their life upon this account. 'Tis reported that there have been some examples hereof amongst the King of *Siam's* Wives: How closely forever they be shut up, they do sometimes find out a way to have Lovers. Some have assur'd me, that the ordinary method by which this Prince punishes them, is first to submit them to a Horse, accustomed I know not how, to the love of Women, and then to put them to death. 'Tis some years since he gave one to the Tygers, and because these Animals spared her at the first, he offered her a Pardon: but this Woman was so unworthy as to refuse it, and with so many affronts, that the King looking upon her as distracted, ordered again that she should dye. They irritated the Tygers, and they tore her in pieces in his presence. It is not so certain that he puts the Lovers to death; but at the least he causes them to be severely chastized. The common opinion at *Siam* is, that 'twas a fault of this nature, which caused the last disgrace of the late *Barcelon*, elder Brother to the King of *Siam's* first Ambassadour to the King. The King his Master caused him to be very severely bastinado'd, and forbore to see him, yet without taking away his Offices. On the contrary, he continued to make use of him during the six months, that he survived the blows which he had received; and he with his own hand prepared all the Remedies which the *Barcelon* took in his last sickness, because no person dared to give him any, for fear of being accused of the death of a man, who appeared so dear to his Master. *Bernier* relates some examples, by which it appears that the Great *Mogul* does not always punish the Women of his *Seraglio* that offended in their duty, nor the Men that are their Accomplices, with death. These Princes consider these sorts of Crimes, like the others, which may be committed against their Majesty, unless any sentiment of Love renders them more sensible of Jealousie.

The Jealousie
of the Siamese
towards their
Daughters.

The *Siamese* Lords are not less jealous of their Daughters than of their Wives; and if any one commits a fault, they sell her to a certain man, who has a privilege of prostituting them for Money, in consideration of a Tribute which he pays the King: 'Tis said that he has six hundred, all Daughters of Officers in esteem. He likewise purchases Wives, when the Husbands sell them, being convicted of Infidelity.

Their respect
towards Old
Men.

Disrespect towards Old Men is not less rare at *Siam* than at *China*. Of the two *Ambassadors* which came on board the Kings Ambassadours Ship, to bring them the first Compliment from the King of *Siam* the younger, tho the highest in dignity, yielded the first place and speech to the elder, who was not above three or four years older.

The Siamese
great Lyars.

Lying towards Superiours is punished by the Superiour himself; and the King of *Siam* punishes it more severely than any other: and notwithstanding all this, they lie as much or more at *Siam*, than in *Europe*.

Great Union
in their Families.

The Union of Families there is such, that a Son who would plead against his Parents, would pass for a Monster: Wherefore no person in this Country dreads Marriage, nor a number of Children: Interest divides not Families: Poverty renders not Marriage burdensome.

Begging is rare
and Shameful
at *Siam*.

Our Domesticks observed only three sorts of Beggars, Aged, Impotent and Friendless persons. Relations permit not their Kindred to beg Alms: They charitably maintain those that cannot maintain themselves out of their Estate

or

or Labour. Begging is shameful there, not only to the Beggar, but to all his Family.

But Robbing is much more ignominious than Begging, I say not to the Robber himself, but to his Relations. The nearest Friend dare not concern themselves about a Man accused of Theft; and it is not strange that Thievery should be reputed so infamous, where they may live so cheap: Thus are their Houses much less secure, than our worst Chefts. Nevertheless as it is not possible to have true Vertue, but in the eternal prospects of Christianity, the *Siamese* do seldom as I may say refuse to steal whatever they meet with. 'Tis properly amongst them that opportunity makes the Thief. They place the Idea of perfect Justice in not gathering up lost things, that is to say in not laying hold on so easie an occasion of getting. After the same manner the *Chinese* to exaggerate the good Government of some of their Princes, do say that under their Reign Justice was in so high an esteem among the People, that no person meddled with what he found scattered in the high Road; and this Idea has not been unknown to the *Greeks*. Anciently in *Greece* the *Stagyria* made a Law in these words: What you have not laid down take not up; and in is perhaps from them that *Plato* learned it; when he inserted it amongst his Laws. But the *Siamese* are very remote from so exquisite a probity.

The *Siamese* are Robbers.

Father *d'Espagnac*, one of those pious and learned Jesuits which we carried to *Siam*, being one day alone in the Divan of their House, a *Siamese* came boldly to take away an excellent *Persian* Carpet from off a Table that was before him; and Father *d'Espagnac* let him do it, because he imagined not that he was a Robber. In the Journey which the King caused the Ambassadors from *Siam* to make into *Flanders*, one of the *Mandarins* which accompanied them, took twenty Scions in a house, where the Ambassadors were invited to dine, as they sojournd in one of the principal Cities of *Picardy*. The next day this *Mandarin* conceiving that these Scions were Money; gave one to a Footman to drink; and his Theft was hereby discovered, but no Notice taken thereof.

Some examples of Theft committed by the *Siamese*.

Behold likewise an ingenious prank, which proves that the opportunity of stealing has so much power over them, that it sometimes sways them, even when it is perilous. One of the Officers of the King of *Siam's* Magazines having stolen some Silver, this Prince ordered him to be put to death, by forcing him to swallow three or four Ounces of melted Silver, and it happened, that he who had order to take those three or four Ounces of Silver out of that Wretch's throat, could not forbear filching part of it. The King therefore caused him to die of the same punishment, and a third exposed himself to the same hazard by committing the like Offence: I mean by stealing part of the Silver, which he took out of the last dead Man's throat. So, that the King of *Siam*, pardoning him his Life, said, there is enough punisht, I should destroy all my Subjects, if I should not resolve to pardon them at last.

It must not be doubted after this, of what is reported of the *Siamese* who live in the Woods, to withdraw themselves from the Government, that they frequently rob the Passengers, yet without killing any. The Woods of *China* have been continually pestered with such Robbers; and there are some who after having enticed a great many Companions with them, have formed whole Armies, and at last rendered themselves Masters of that great Kingdom.

Robbers in the Woods of *Siam* and *China*; which do very rarely kill.

On the other hand, Fidelity is exceeding great at *Siam*, in all sorts of Traffick, as I have elsewhere remarked: but Usury is there practised without bounds. Their Laws have not provided against it, though their Morality prohibits it. Avarice is their essential Vice; and what is more wonderful herein, is that they heap not up riches to use them, but to bury them.

The fidelity of the *Siamese* in Commerce, their boundless Usury, and their Avarice.

As they traffick not almost with immoveables, make no Wills, nor publick Contracts, and as in a word they have no Notaries, it seems that they cannot almost have any Suits, and they have indeed few Civil, but a great many Criminal causes. 'Tis principally out of spite that they exercise their secret Hatreds and Revenges; and they find facility therein with the Judges, who in this Country, as in *Europe*, do live on their profession. The *Siamese* have naturally an aversion to blood: but when they hate, even unto death, which is very rare, they

They are very revengeful, and how.

they assassinate, or they poyson, and understand not the uncertain Revenge of Duels, yet most of their quarrels do terminate only in blows, or reciprocal defamations.

Other qualities of the *Siam*es.

The Ancients have remark'd that it is the Humidity of the Elements, which defends the *Indians* against that action of the Sun, which burns the Complexion of the *Negro's*, and makes their Hair to grow like Cotton. The Nourishment of the *Siam*es is likewise more aqueous, than that of any other People of the *Indies*; and unto them may be safely attributed all the good, and all the bad qualities, which proceed from Phlegm and Spittle; because that Phlegm and Spittle are the necessary effects of their Nourishment. They are courteous, polite, fearful, and careless. They contain themselves a long time, but when once their Rage is kindled, they have perhaps less discretion than we have. Their Timidity, their Avarice, their Dissimulation, their Silences, their Inclination to lying do increase with them. They are stiff in their Customs, as much one of Idleness, as out of respect to their Ancestors, who have transmitted them to them. They have no curiosity, and do admire nothing. They are proud with those that deal gently with them, and humble to those that treat them with rigour. They are subtle and variable, like all those that perceive their own weakness.

Their Friendship is perfidious.

Their manner of promising themselves an eternal amity, is by drinking of the same *Aqua Vita* in the same Cup, and when they would swear themselves more solemnly, they taste the blood one of another; which *Lucian* gives us for a Custom of the ancient *Scythians*, and which is practised also by the *Chinese*, and by other Nations: but the *Siam*es cease not sometimes to betray after all these Ceremonies.

They are naturally more moderate than we are, because they are more dull.

In general they have more Moderation than us: their Honors are as calm as their Heaven, which changes only twice a year and insensibly, when it turns by little and little from Rain to Fair-weather, and from Fair-weather to Rain. They act only by necessity, and do not like us place merit in Action. It seems not rational to them that Labour and Pains should be the Fruit and Reward of Vertue. They have the good Fortune to be born Philosophers, and it may be that if they were not born such, they would not become so more than we. I therefore willingly believe what the Ancients have reported, that Philosophy came from the *Indies* into *Europe*; and that we have been more concerned at the insensibility of the *Indians*, than the *Indians* have been at the wonders, which our Iniquitude has produced in the discovery of so many different Arts, whereof we flatter our selves, perhaps to no purpose, that necessity was the Mother. But enough is spoken of the *Siam*es in general, let us enter into the particulars of their manners, according to their various conditions.

PART III

PART III.

Of the Manners of the Siameses, according to their several Conditions.

CHAPTER I.

Of the several Conditions among the Siameses.

AT Siam all Persons are either Freemen or Slaves. The Master has all power over the Slave, except that of killing him: And tho' some may report, that Slaves are severely beaten there, (which is very probable in a Country where free persons are so rigidly bastinado'd) yet the Slavery there is so gentle, or, if you will, the Liberty is so abject, that it is become a Proverb, that the Siameses sell it to eat of a Fruit, which they call *Durians*. I have already said, that they chuse rather to enjoy it, than to enjoy none at all: 'Tis certain also, that they dread Beggary more than Slavery; and this makes me to think, that Beggary is there as painful as ignominious, and that the Siameses, who express a great deal of Charity for Beasts, even to the relieving them, if they find any sick in the Fields, have very little for the Men.

They employ their Slaves in cultivating their Lands and Gardens, and in some domestic Services; or rather, they permit them to work to gain their livelihood, under a Tribute which they receive, from four to eight *Ticals* a Year, that is to say, from seven Livres ten Sols, to fifteen Livres.

One may be born, or become a Slave. One becomes so either for Debt, as I have said, or for having been taken Captive in War, or for having been confiscated by Justice. When one is made a Slave for Debt, his Liberty returns again by making satisfaction; but the Children born during this Slavery, tho' it be but for a time, continue Slaves.

One is born a Slave, when born of a Mother-slave; and in the Slavery, the Children are divided as in the Divorce. The first, third, fifth, and all the rest in the odd number belong to the Master of the Mother: the second, fourth, and all the others in the even rank belong to the Father, if he is free; or to his Master, if he is a Slave. 'Tis true, that it is necessary upon this account, that the Father and Mother should have had Commerce together, with the consent of the Master of the Mother: for otherwise all the Children would belong to the Master of the Mother.

The difference of the King of Siam's Slaves from his Subjects of free condition, is, that he continually employs his Slaves in personal labours, and maintains them; whereas his free Subjects only owe him six months service every Year, but at their own expence.

In a word, the Slaves of particular men owe not any service to that Prince; and tho' for this Reason he loses a Freeman, when this man falls into slavery, either for Debt, or to avoid Beggary, yet this Prince opposes it not, neither pretends any Indemnity upon this account.

Properly speaking, there is not two sorts of Conditions among free persons. Nobility is no other thing than the actual possession of Offices, the Families

Of the Slave-ry according to the Manners of Siam.

In what the Slaves are employed.

A Siamese may be born, or become a Slave.

How he is born a Slave, and to whom he belongs.

The difference between the King of Siam's Slaves, and his other Subjects. The Slaves of private men owe not any service to the King.

Of the Siamese Nobility:

which do long maintain themselves therein; do become doubtless more illustrious and more powerful; but they are rare: and so soon as they have lost their Offices, they have nothing, which distinguishes them from the common People. There is frequently seen at the *Page*, the Grandson of a Man who died a great Lord, and sometimes his own Son.

Of the Priests
or *Talapains*.

The distinction between the People and the Priests is only an uncertain distinction, seeing that one may continually pass from one of these States to the other. The Priests are the *Talapains*, of whom we shall speak in the sequel. Under the Name of People I comprehend whatever is not a Priest, viz. the King, Officers, and People, of whom we now proceed to speak.

CHAP. II.

Of the Siamese People.

The Siamese
people is a
Militia.

THE Siamese People is a Militia, where every particular person is registred: They are all Souldiers, in *Siamese* *Taban*, and do all owe six Months service annually to their Prince. It belongs to the Prince to arm them, and give them Elephants or Horses, if he would have them serve either on Elephants, or on Horseback: but it belongs to them to cloath, and to maintain themselves. And as the Prince never employs all his Subjects in his Armies, and that oftentimes he sends no Army into the Field, though he be at War with some of his Neighbours, yet for six months in the year he employs in such a work, or in such a service as pleases him, those Subjects which he employs not in the War.

Is counted and
divided into
men on the
right hand, and
on the left.

And by Bands.

Wherefore, to the end that no person may escape the personal service of the Prince, there is kept an exact account of the People. 'Tis divided into men on the right hand, and men on the left, to the end that every one may know on what side he ought to range himself in his Functions.

And besides this it is divided into Bands, each of which has its Chief, which they call *Nai*: so that this word *Nai* is become a term of Civility, which the *Siamese* do reciprocally give one to the other, as the *Chinese* do interchange the Title of Master or Governor.

What difference
there is
between a
Band and a
Company.

I have said that the Siamese People is divided by Bands, rather than by Companies, because that the number of Soldiers of the same Band is not fix'd, and because that all those of the same Band, are not of the same Company in the Army: and I have said, that *Nai* signifies Chief, though some translate it by the word *Captain*, because that the *Nai* does not always lead his Band to the War, no more than to the six months Service: His care is to furnish as many men out of his Band, as are required, either for the War, or for the six months Service.

The Children
are of the same
Band with
their Parents.

The Children are of the same Band with their Parents; and if the Parents are of different Bands, the Children in the odd rank are of the Mother's Band, and the Children in the even rank of the Father's; provided nevertheless that the Mother's *Nai* hath been acquainted with the Marriage, and that he hath given his consent thereunto: otherwise the Children would be all of the Mother's Band.

The *Talapains*
and Women
are exempt
from service,
and yet are re-
gister'd, and
why.

Thus, though the *Talapains* and Women do enjoy all exemption from Service, as not being esteem'd Soldiers, yet they cease not to be set down in the Rolls of the People: the *Talapains*, because they may return when they please to a secular condition, and that then they fall again under the power of their natural *Nai*: the Women because their Children are of their Band, or all, or the greatest part, as I have said.

The Advanta-
ges of the *Nai*.

'Tis one of the *Nai*'s Privileges to be able to lend to his Soldier sooner than any other, and to be able to satisfy his Soldiers Creditor; thereby to make his Soldier his Slave, when he is insolvable. As the King gives a *Balon* to each Officer

Officer with a certain number of *Pagawur*, and as these are the Officers, which are also the *Nai*, every Officer has his *Pagawur* in his Band. They brand them on the outside of the Wrist with an hot Iron and an Anchor over it; and these sort of Domesticsticks are called *Ban*. But none of the *Ban*'s or *Pagawur* owes to his *Nai* only this service, and that only six months in the year, wherefore they are released from six months to six months, or by month, as it pleases the *Nai*: the *Nai* has also some Offices in the Law as we shall see.

Now the more numerous his Band is, the more powerful he is esteemed: The Offices and Employments of *Siam* being important only in this. The Dignities of *Pa-ya*, *De-ya*, *Oc-Pra*, *Oc-Lanang*, *Oc-Comme*, *Oc-Mening*, and *Oc-Pan* are seven degrees of these *Nai*. 'Tis true that the Title of *Oc-Pan* is now disused. *Pan* signifies a *Thousand*, and it was thought that an *Oc-Pan* was Chief of a *Thousand Men*. *Mening* signifies *Ten Thousand*, and it is thought that an *Oc-Mening* is the Chief of *Ten Thousand Men*: not that in truth it was so, but that in the Indies they magnifie the Titles. No person could give me the true signification of these words, *Pa-ya*, *De-ya*, *Oc-Pra*, *Oc-Lanang*, *Oc-Comme*, not how many men are assigned to each of the five Dignities; but it is probable that as the words *Pan* and *Mening* are Terms of Number, the rest are so too.

The word *Oc* seems to signify Chief; for they have another Title without Function, viz. *Oc-Meuang*, which seems to signify Chief of a City, in that *Meuang* signifies a City, and in that it is necessary to have been made *Oc-Meuang* before he be effectually made Governor, whom they call *Tchaou-Meuang*, Lord of a City.

But this word *Oc* is not *Siamese*; Chief in *Siamese* is called *Houa*, and this word *Houa* properly signifies the Head. From hence comes *Houa Sip*, Chief of *Ten*, which is, as I have elsewhere said, the Title of him that mounts the Elephant at the Crupper. After the same manner they call him, that bears the Royal Standard in the *Ralon* where the King is, *Houapan*, or Chief of a *Thousand*. To return to the word *Oc*, a Superior never useth it to an Inferior. Thus the King of *Siam* speaking to *Oc-Pra Pipitcharatcha*, will not, for example, say *Oc-Pra Pipitcharatcha*, but only *Pra-Pipitcharatcha*; A man relating his own Titles himself, will also modestly suppress this term *Oc*; and in fine, the inferior People in speaking of the highest Officers will omit the word *Oc*, and will say for example, *ya-jumrat*, for *Ocya-jumrat*; *Mening Vai*, for *Oc-Mening Vai*.

The Portuguese have translated the word *Pa-ya*, by that of Prince; not in my opinion, from their right understanding it, but because they have seen this Title given to Princes, and that the King of *Siam* gives it himself; but he sometimes gives it also to the Officers of his Court, which are not Princes, and he gives it not always to the Princes of the Blood. The Lords of the Great *Mogul*'s Court are called, according to *Bernier*, *Hazary*, *Dow-hazary*, *Peige*, *beked*, and *Dab-hazary*, that is to say, *One Thousand*, *Two Thousand*, *Five*, *Eight*, and *Ten Thousand*, as if one should say, Lords over so many *Thousands* of Horse: though in reality they could neither maintain, nor command so great a number. The great *Mogul*'s eldest Son, he says, is called *Twelve Thousand*, as if he had the effective command of *Twelve Thousand Horse*. 'Tis no strange thing therefore that the King of *Siam*'s Subjects being esteemed Soldiers, as those of the Great *Mogul* are esteemed Horsemen, have equally assumed in both Courts the term of number to express the highest Dignities, and to name the Princes themselves; yet I cannot affirm this is so at *Siam*, by reason that I know only that the words *Pan* and *Mening* are *Siamese* and numeral Terms: but as to the other names of Dignity, which I have mentioned, some have informed me that they are *Balio*, and that they understood them not. I know that in the Country of *Lao* the Dignities of *Pa-ya* and *Meuang*, and the honourable Epithets of *Pra* are in use; it may be also that the other Terms of Dignity are common to both Nations, as well as the Laws.

In reference to the six Dignities (for that of *Oc-pan* is obsolete, as I have said) Six orders of there are now at *Siam* six Orders of Cities, which have been anciently determined according to the Rolls of the Inhabitants. So that such a City, which was then found very populous had a *Pa-ya* for Governor, and such which was less popu-

What at *Siam* are the dignities of *Pa-ya*, *Oc-ya* and the rest.

Of the word *Oc*.

This word is not *Siamese* and how they use it.

Of the word *Pa-ya*.

Cities of *Siam*.

populous had an *Oc-ya*, and the rest had also other Dignities in proportion to the Inhabitants which they contained. But it is not necessary to believe that these Cities have ever been so populous as the Titles of their Governors import; by reason, as I have often alledged, that these People are very proud in Titles. Only the greatest Titles were given to the Governors of the biggest Cities, and the least Titles to the Governors of the Cities less inhabited. Thus the City of *Me-Tac*, of which I have spoken at the beginning, had a Governor called *Pa-ya-Tac*, and the word *Me* which signifies *Mother*, and which is joyned to *Tac*, seems to intimate that the City of *Me-Tac* was very great. The City of *Porcelone* had also a *Pa-ya*; *Tenasserim*, *Ligor*, *Corazema* and other, have still some *Oc-ya*. Lesser Cities, as *Pipeli* and *Bancock*, have the *Oc-pra*, others have the *Oc-Luang*, or the *Oc-Coumees*, and the least of all have the *Oc-Mening*. The Portuguese have translated these Titles according to their fancy by those of *King*, *Vice-Roy*, *Duke*, *Marquis*, *Earl*, &c. They have given the Title of Kingdom to *Metac*, *Tenasserim*, *Porcelone*, *Ligor*, and *Pipeli*; either by reason of their hereditary Governments, or for having been like *Pipeli* the residence of the Kings of *Siam*; and to the Kings of *Siam* they have given the Title of Emperor, because the *Spaniards* have ever thought the Title of Emperor ought to be given to Kings, that have other Kings for Feudatories: So that upon this single reason some Kings of *Castille* have born the Title of Emperor, giving to their Children the Title of Kings of the several Kingdoms which were united to their Crown.

The dignities of the *Siameses* are not annex to the single Governments of City or Province.

To return to the Titles of the *Siameses*, they are given not only to the Governors, but to all the Officers of the Kingdom; because that they are all *Nai*: and the same Title is not always joyned to the same Office. The *Barcelon*, for example, has sometimes had that of *Pa-ya*, as some have informed me, and now he has only that of *Oc-ya*. But if a Man has two Offices, he may have two different Titles in respect to his two Offices: and it is not rare that one Man has two Offices, one in the City and the other in the Province, or rather one in Title and the other by Commission. Thus *Oc-ya Pra-Sedet* who is Governor of the City of *Siam* in Title, is now *Oc-ya Barcelon* by Commission: the King of *Siam* finding it his interest, because that upon this account he gives not to one Officer a double Salary.

The Equivocations which this causes in Relations.

But this Multiplication of Offices on the same Head causes a great deal of Obscurity and Equivocation in the ancient Relations of *Siam*; because that when a man has two Offices, he has two Titles, and two Names, and when the Relation imports that such an *Oc-ya* for example, is concerned in such a thing, one is inclined to believe that the Relation has still'd this *Oc-ya* by the title of the function which it attributes to him, and frequently it has named him by the title of another Office. Thus if a Relation of the Kingdom of *France* made by a *Siamese* should intimate, that the Duke of *Mayne* is General of the *Suisses*, the *Siamese* might groundlessly persuade themselves, that every General of the *Suisses* bears the Title of Duke of *Mayne*. And this is what I had to say touching the People of *Siam*.

C H A P. III.

Of the Officers of the Kingdom of Siam in general.

The proper signification of the word *Mandar*.

THE Portuguese have generally called all the Officers throughout the whole extent of the East *Mandarins*; and it is probable that they have formed this word from that of *Mandar*, which in their Language signifies to command. *Nevarette*, whom I have already cited, is of this opinion; and we may confirm it, because that the Arabian word *Emir*, which is used at the Court of the Great *Mogul*, and in several other Mahometan Courts of the *Indies*, to signify the Officers, is derived from the Arabian Verb *amara*, which signifies to command. The word *Mandarin*

rin extends also to the Children of the Principal Officers, which are considered as Children of Quality, called *Mon* in Siamese. But I shall make use of the word *Mandarin*, only to signify the Officers.

The King of Siam therefore makes no considerable *Mandarin*, but he gives ^{The King of Siam gives Names to the considerable} him a new Name; a Custom established also at China, and in other States of the East. This Name is always an *Elogium*; sometimes it is purposely invented, like that which he gave to the Bishop of *Metropolis*, and like those which he gives to the Foreigners that are at his Court; but oftentimes these Names are ancient, and known for having been formerly given to others; and those are the most honourable, which have been heretofore born by persons very highly advanced in Dignity, or by the Princes of the Royal Blood. And although such Names be not always accompanied with Offices and Authority, they cease not to be a great Mark of Favour. It likewise happens that the same Name is given to several persons of different Dignities; so that at the same time the one, for example, will call himself, *Oc-Pra Pipitcharacha*, and the other *Oc-Cimne Pipitcharacha*. These Names, of which the first words are only spoken, and which do every one make a Period, are taken almost all entire out of the *Bahy* Tongue, and are not always well understood: But this, and the Style of the Laws, which participate very much of the *Bahy*, and the Books of Religion, which are *Bahy*, are the cause why the Kings of Siam ought not to ignore this Tongue. Forasmuch as, I have elsewhere said, it lends all its Ornaments to the Siamese, and that oftentimes they do elegantly intermix them, either in speaking or in writing.

The Law of the State is, that all Offices should be hereditary; and the same ^{All Offices are hereditary.} Law is in the Kingdom of *Lao*, and was anciently at China. But the selling of Offices is not there permitted: and moreover the least fault of the Parent, or the capricious Humor of the Prince, or the Dotage of the Inheritor may take away the Offices from the Families; and when this happens it is always without Recompence. Very few Families do long maintain themselves therein, especially in the Offices of the Court, which are more than the rest under the Master's power.

Moreover, no Officer at Siam has any Salary. The Prince lodges them, ^{The Profits of which is no great matter; and gives them some moveables, as Boxes of Gold or Silver for *Betal*; some Arms, and a *Balon*; some Beasts, as Elephants, Horses, and Buffalo's; some Services, Slaves, and in fine some Arable Lands. All which return to the King with the Office, and which do principally make the King to be the Heir of his Officers. But the principal gain of the Offices consists in Extortions, because that in this there is no Justice for the weak. All the Officers do hold a correspondence in pillaging; and the Corruption is greatest in those from whence the Remedy ought to come. The Trade of Presents is publick; the least Officers do give unto the greatest, under a Title of Respect; and a Judge is not there punished for having received Presents, if otherwise he be not convicted of Injustice, which is not very easie to do.}

The Form of the Oath of Fidelity consists in swallowing the water, over which ^{The Oath of Fidelity.} the *Talapouts* do pronounce some Imprecations against him, who is to drink it, in case he fails in the Fidelity which he owes to his King. This Prince dispenses not with this Oath to any persons that engage themselves in his Service, of what Religion or Nation soever.

The Publick Law of Siam is written in three Volumes. The first is called *Pra Tam Ra*, and contains the Names, Functions, and Prerogatives of all the ^{The Publick Law of Siam is written.} Offices. The second is intitled, *Pra Tam Non*, and is a Collection of the Constitutions of the Ancient Kings; and the third is the *Pra Raja Cammanot*, wherein are the Constitutions of the now Regent King's Father.

Nothing would have been more necessary than a faithful extract of these three Volumes, rightly to make known the Constitution of the Kingdom of *Siam*; but so far was I from being able to get a Translation, that I could not procure a Copy thereof in Siamese. It would have been necessary upon this account to continue longer at Siam, and with less business. This is therefore what I could learn certainly about this matter, without the assistance of those Books, ^{The difficulty of procuring the Books thereof.}

and in a Country where every one is afraid to speak. The greatest token of Servitude of the *Siamese* is, that they dare not to open their mouth about any thing that relates to their Country.

CHAP. IV.

Concerning the Offices of Judicatory.

The Division
of the King-
dom of *Siam*
by Provinces.

THE Kingdom of *Siam* is divided into the upper and lower. The upper lies towards the North, (seeing that the River descends from thence) and contains seven Provinces, which are named by their Chief Cities, *Perfelone*, *Sanquelone*, *Lacantai*, *Campeng-pet*, *Coconrepina*, *Pechebonne*, and *Pitchai*. At *Perfelone* do immediately arise ten Jurisdications, at *Sanquelone* eight, at *Lacantai* seven, at *Campeng-pet* ten, at *Coconrepina* five, at *Pechebonne* two, and at *Pitchai* seven. And besides this there are in the upper *Siam* one and twenty other Jurisdications, to which no other Jurisdiction resorts; but which do resort to the Court, and are as so many little Provinces.

In the lower *Siam*, that is to say in the South part of the Kingdom, they reckon the Provinces of *Jor*, *Patana*, *Ligor*, *Tenasserim*, *Chantebonne*, *Petelong*, *Bordelong*, and *Tchibai*. On *Jor* do immediately depend seven Jurisdications, on *Patana* eight, on *Ligor* twenty, on *Tenasserim* twelve, on *Chantebonne* seven, on *Petelong* eight, and on *Tchibai* two. And besides this, there are likewise in the lower *Siam* thirteen small Jurisdications, which are as so many particular Provinces, which resort only to the Court, and to which no other Jurisdiction resorts. The City of *Siam* has its Province apart, in the heart of the State, between the upper and lower *Siam*.

The Govern-
nor is the
Judge.

The whole Tribunal of Judicature consists properly only in a single Officer, seeing that it is the Chief or President only that has the deliberate voice, and that all the other Officers have only a consultative voice, according to the Custom received also at *China*, and in the other Neighbouring States. But the most important prerogative of the President is to be the Governour of his whole Jurisdiction, and to command even the Garrisons, if there be any; unless the Prince hath otherwise disposed thereof by an express order. So that as in other places these Offices are hereditary, it is no difficult matter for some of these Governors, and especially the most powerful, and for the most remote from Court, to withdraw themselves wholly or in part from the Royal Authority.

Jor belongs no
more to the
Kingdom of
of *Siam*.

Thus the Governor of *Jor* renders Obedience no longer. and the *Portuguese* give him the Title of King. And it may be he never intends to obey, unless the Kingdom of *Siam* should extend it self, as Relations declare, to the whole *Peninsula extra Gangem*. *Jor* is the most Southern City thereof, seated on a River, which has its Mouth at the Cape of *Singapura*, and which forms a very excellent Port.

Nor *Patana*.

The People of *Patana* live, like those of *Achem* in the Isle of *Sumatra*, under the Domination of a Woman, whom they always elect in the same Family, and always old, to the end that she may have no occasion to marry, and in the name of whom the most trusty persons do rule. The *Portuguese* have likewise given her the Title of Queen, and for Tribute she sends to the King of *Siam* every three Years two small Trees, the one of Gold, the other of Silver, and both loaded with Flowers and Fruits; but she owes not any assistance to this Prince in his Wars. Whether these Gold and Silver Trees are a real Homage, or only a Respect to maintain the liberty of Commerce, as the King of *Siam* sends Presents every three Years to the King of *China*, in consideration of Trade only, is what I cannot alledge; but as the King of *China* honours himself with these sorts of Presents, and takes them for a kind of Homage, it may well be, that

that the King of *Siam* does not less value himself on the Presents he receives from the Queen of *Patana*, altho' she be not perhaps his Vassal.

The *Siam*ses do call an Hereditary Governor *Tchaon-Meuang*; *Tchaon* signifies Lord, and *Meuang* a City or Province, and sometimes a Kingdom. The Kings of *Siam* have ruin'd and destroy'd the most potent *Tchaon-Meuang*, as much as they could, and have substituted in their place some Triennial Governors by Commission. These Commission-Governors are called *Pouran*, and *Pou* signifies a Person.

Besides the Presents which the *Tchaon-Meuang* may receive, as I have declar'd, The Profits or Rights of the *Tchaon-Meuang*.

First, Equally to share with the King the Rents that the arable Lands do yield, which they call *Naa*, that is to say *Fields*; and according to the ancient Law, these Rents are a *Mayon*, or quarter part of a *Tical* for forty Fathom, or two hundred Foot square.

2^{dly}, The *Tchaon-Meuang* has the profit of all Confiscations, of all the Penalties to the Exchequer, and ten *per Cent*. of all the Fines to the Party. The Confiscations are fixed by Law according to the Cases, and are not always the whole Estate, not even in case of sentence of Death; but sometimes also they extend to the Body, not only of the Person condemn'd, but of his Children too.

3^{dly}, The King of *Siam* gives the *Tchaon-Meuang* some men to execute his Orders; they accompany him everywhere, and they row in his *Balon*. The *Siam*ses do call them *Kenlai*, or *Painted Arms*; by reason that they pink and mangle their Arms, and lay Gunpowder on the wounds, which paints their Arms with a faded Blue. The *Portuguese* do call them *Painted Arms*, and *Officers*; and these *Painted Arms*, are still used in the Country of *Laos*.

4^{thly}, In the Maritime Governments, the *Tchaon-Meuang* sometimes takes Customs of the Merchant Ships, but it is generally inconsiderable. At *Tenasserim* it is eight *per Cent*. in the kind, according to the Relation of the Foreign Missions.

Some have assur'd me, that the *Siam*ses have the Humanity not to appropriate any thing to themselves of what the Tempest casts on their Coasts by Shipwreck; yet *Ferdinand Mendes Pinto* relates, that *Lewis de Montero*, a *Portuguese*, having suffer'd Shipwreck on the Coast of *Siam* near *Patana*, the *Chabaudar*, or that have suffer'd Shipwreck. Custom-house Officer, which he names *Chatir*, confiscated not only the Ship and its Cargo, but *Adonero* himself, and some Children; alledging, that by the ancient Custom of the Kingdom, whatever the Sea cast upon the Coasts, was the profit of his Office. 'Tis true, that this Author adds, with great Praises on the King of *Siam* who then reigned, that this Prince, at the Request of the *Portuguese* which were at his Court, set *Montero* at liberty, and restor'd him all the Prize, and the Children; but he subjoins also that it was out of Charity, and on the day that this Prince went through the City mounted on a white Elephant, to distribute Alms to the People.

5^{thly}, The *Tchaon-Meuang* arrogating to themselves all the Rights of Sovereignty over the Frontiers, do levy, when they can, extraordinary Taxes on the People.

6^{thly}, The *Tchaon-Meuang* do exercise Commerce every where, but under the name of their Secretary, or some other of their Domestic. And this last Circumstance demonstrates that they have some shame, and that the Law perhaps prohibits them; but that in this they are not more scrupulous than their King.

7^{thly}, In some places where there are Fish-ponds, the *Tchaon-Meuang* take the best of the Fish when the Pond is emptied; but he takes for his own use only, and not to sell, and the rest he leaves to the People.

8^{thly}, Venison and Salt are free throughout the Kingdom, and the King himself has laid no Prohibition nor Impost thereon. Salt is there of little value. I have heard that they have Rock-salt, and they make it of Sea-water; some have told me with the Sun, others with Fire; and, perhaps, both is true. At the places where the Shoars are too high to receive the Sea, and in those, where Wood is not near at hand, the Salt may fail, or cost too much to make, as in

the

the Island of *Fanfalam*, the Inhabitants whereof do rather chuse to import their Salt from *Tenasserim*.

The Rights
or Profits of
the *Pou-ran*.

The *Pou-ran*, or Governor by Commission, has the same Honours, and the same Authority as the *Tchaou-Menang*, but not the same Profits. The King of *Siam* names the *Pou-ran* upon two Accounts, either when he would have no *Tchaou-Menang*, or when the *Tchaou-Menang* is obliged to absent himself from his Government; for the *Tchaou-Menang* has no ordinary Lieutenant who can supply his place in his absence, as in *France* the Chancellor has none. In the first Case the *Pou-ran* has only the Profits which the King assigns him at naming him; in the second Case he takes the Moyety of the Profits from the *Tchaou-Menang*, and leaves him the other Moyety.

The Names
and Functions
of the Officers
which com-
pose a Tribu-
nal.

Now follows the ordinary Officers of a Tribunal of Judicature, not that there are so many in every one, but that in any one perhaps there is not more.

Oc-ya Tchaou-Menang. The *Tchaou-Menang* is not always *Oc-ya*; he has sometimes another Title, and the other Officers of his Tribunal have always some Titles proportion'd to his.

Oc-Pra Belat. His Name signifies *Second*, but he presides not in the absence of the *Tchaou-Menang*, because he has no determinative Voice.

Oc-Pra Jockebatest, a kind of Attorney-General, and his Office is to be a strict Spy upon the Governor. His Office is not Hereditary, the King nominates some person of Trust; but Experience evinces, that there is no Fidelity in these Men, and that all the Officers hold a private Correspondence to pillage the People.

Oc-Pra Penn commands the Garrison, if there is any, but under the Orders of the *Tchaou-Menang*; and he has no Authority over his Soldiers, but when they are in the Field.

Oc-Pra Maha-Tai, is, as it were, the Chief of the People. His Name seems to signify the *Great Siamese*; for *Maha* signifies *Great*, and *Tai* signifies *Siamese*. 'Tis he that levies the Soldiers, or rather that demands them of the *Nai*: who sends Provisions to the Army, who watches that the Rolls of the People be well made; and who, in general, executes all the Governor's Orders which concern the People.

Oc-Pra Saffedi makes and keeps the Rolls of the People. 'Tis an Office very subject to Corruption, by reason that every particular person endeavors to get himself omitted out of the Rolls for money. The *Nai* do likewise seek to favor those of their Band, who make Presents to them, and to oppress those with labour who have nothing to give them. The *Maha-Tai*, and the *Saffedi*, would prevent this disorder, if they were not the first corrupted. The *Saffedi* begins to enter down Children upon the Rolls, when they are three or four Years old.

Oc-Louang-Menang is, as it were, the Mayor of the City; for, as I have already said, *Menang* signifies City; but as for what concerns the Title of *Oc-Louang*, it does not signify *Mayor*, and is no more applied to that Office than another Title. This Mayor takes care of the Polity and Watch. They keep a Watch every Night round the Ambassador's Lodgings, as round the King of *Siam*'s Palace, and this was a very great Token of Honour.

Oc-Louang Vang is the Master of the Governor's Palace, for *Vang* signifies *Palace*. He causes it to be repair'd, he commands the Governor's Guards, and even their Captain; and, in a word, he orders in the Governor's Palace, whatever has relation to the Governor's charge.

Oc-Louang-Peng keeps the Book of the Law and the Custom, according to which they judge; and when Judgment is passed, he reads the Article thereof, which serves for the Judgment of the Process: and, in a word, it is he that pronounces the Sentence.

Oc-Louang Clang has the Charge of the King's Magazine, *Clang* signifies *Magazine*. He receives certain of the King's Revenues, and sells to the People the King's Commodities, that is to say those, the Trade of which the King appropriates to himself, as in *Europe* the Princes do generally appropriate the Trade of Salt to themselves.

Oc-Lan-

Oc-Louang Conca has the Inspection over Foreigners; he protects them, or accuses them to the Governor.

Moreover there are some Officers in every superior Tribunal to send to the inferior Justices, when the *Tchaon-Meuang* or *Papran* are dead, whilst that the King fills the place: and the number of these Officers are as great as that of the inferior Justices.

Oc-Louang or *Oc-Comme Coeng* is the Provost: he is always armed with a Sabre, and has Painted Arms like Archers.

Oc-Comme Pa-ya Bat is the Keeper of the Goal or Prisons: and the word *Pa-ya* which the Portuguese have translated by that of *Prince*, seems exceedingly vilified in the Title of this Office. *Nai-Gang* is the true Goaler, *Conc* signifies a Prison, and nothing is more cruel than the Prisons of Siam. They are Cages of Bamboo exposed to all the injuries of the Air.

Oc-Comme Narin commands those that have the care of the Elephants, which the King has in the Province: for there are some in several places, because it would be difficult to lodge and feed a very great number of Elephants together.

Oc-Comme Nai-rang is the Purveyor of the Elephants. In a word, there is an Officer in every Tribunal to read the *Tara* or Orders from the King to the Governor, and an House in an eminent place for to keep them: As within the inclosure of the King of Siam's Palace there is a single House, on an eminent place, to keep all the Letters which the King of Siam receives from other Kings.

These are the Officers which are called from within. Besides these, there are others which are called from without, for the Service of the Province. All have an entire dependance upon the Governor; and altho those without have the like Titles, yet they are very inferior to the Officers within. Thus an *Oc-Meuang* within the Palace, is superior to an *Oc-ya* without; and in a word it is not necessary to believe that all those who bear great Titles, must always be great Lords: That infamous fellow who buys Women and Maids to prostitute them bears the Title of *Oc-ya*; he is called *Oc-ya Aeen*, and is a very contemptible person. There are none but debauch'd persons that have any Correspondence with him. Every one of the Officers within has his Lieutenant, in *Siamese Balat*, and his Register in *Siamese Semien*, and in his House, which the King gives him, he has generally an Hall to give his Audiences.

An important distinction is to Officers within and Officers without.

C H A P. V.

Of the Judiciary Stile and Form of Pleading.

They have only one Stile for all matters in Law, and they have not thought fit to divide them into Civil and Criminal: either because there is always a double Stile. Some punishment due to him that is cast, even in a matter purely Civil, or because that suits in matters purely Civil are very rare there.

'Tis a general Rule amongst them, that all Process should be in writing, and that they plead not without giving Caution.

But as the whole People of the Jurisdiction is divided by Bands, and that their principal *Nai* are the Officers of the Tribunal, whom I shall call by the general name of Councillors; in case of process the Plaintiff goes first to the Councillor who is his *Nai*, or to his Country *Nai*, who goes to the Councillor *Nai*. He presents him his Petition, and the Councillor presents it to the Governor. The Duty of the Governor is nicely to examine it; and to admit or reject it according as to him it seems just or unjust; and in this last case to Chastise the Party, who presented it, to the end that no person might begin any process rashly, and this is likewise the Stile or form of China, but it is little observed at Siam.

They plead only in writing and by giving Bail. The Function of the *Nai* in Law Suits.

How a Process is prepared at Siam.

The Governor then admits the Petition, and refers it to one of the Councillors; and ordinarily he returns it to him that presented it, if he is the common *Nai* of both parties: but then he puts his Seal thereunto, and he counts the lines and the cancelling thereof, to the end that no alteration may be made. The Councillor gives it to his Deputy and to his Clerk, who make their report to him at his House in his Hall of Audience: And this report, and all those which I shall treat of in the sequel, are only a Lecture. After this the Councillor's Clerk presented by his Master, reports or reads this very Petition, in the Governor's Hall, at an Assembly of all the Councillors; but in the absence of the Governor, who vouchsafes not to appear at whatever serves only to prepare the Cause. The Parties are there called in under pretence of endeavouring to reconcile them: and they are summon'd three times, more for fashions sake, than with a sincere intention of procuring the accommodation. This Reconciliation not succeeding, the Court orders, if there are witnesses, that they should be heard before the same Clerk, unless he be declared suspected. And in such another Session, that is to say, where the Governor is not present, the Clerk reads the Process and the depositions of the Witnesses, and they proceed to the Opinions, which are only consultative, and which are all writ down, beginning with the Opinion of the last Officer.

The Form of the Judgments.

The Process being thus prepar'd, and the Council standing in presence of the Governor, his Clerk reads unto him the Process and the Opinions; and the Governor, after having resum'd them all, interrogates those whose Opinions seem to him not just, to know of them upon what reasons they grounded them. After this Examination he pronounces in general terms, that such of the Parties shall be condemn'd according to the Law.

The Law or Custom is read.

Then it belongs to *Oe-Louang-Peng* to read with a loud voice the Article of the Law, which respects the suit: but in that Country, as in this, they dispute the sense of the Laws. They do there seek out some accommodations under the title of Equity; and under pretence that all the circumstances of the fact are never in the Law, they never follow the Law. The Governor alone decides these disputes, and the Sentence is pronounced upon the parties, and set down in Writing. But if it be contrary to all appearance of Justice, it belongs to the *Jochibat*, or the Kings Attorney General, to advertise the Court thereof, but not to oppose it.

Suits are a long time depending. They have no Advocate nor Attorney.

Every suit ought to end in three days, and some there are which last three years.

The parties do speak before the Clerk, who writes down what they tell him; and they speak either by themselves, or by another: but it is necessary that this other, who herein performs the office of an Attorney or Advocate, should be at least Cousin German to him for whom he speaks; otherwise he would be punished, and not heard.

Before whom they produce.

The Clerk receives likewise all the Titles and Deeds, but in presence of the Court, who counts all the lines thereof.

Proofs subsidiary to the Torture.

When ordinary proofs do not suffice, they have recourse to Torture in Accusations, which are very grievous upon this account; and they apply it rigorously, and in several ways: or rather they use the proofs of Water and of Fire, or of some others as superstitious, but not of Duelling.

The Proof of the Fire.

In the Proof of Fire they erect a Pile of Faggots in a Ditch, in such a manner that the surface of the Pile be level with the edge of the Ditch. This Pile is five fathoms long, and one broad. Both the parties do walk with their naked Feet from one end to the other, and he that has not the sole of his Feet hurt gains his Suit. But as they are accustomed to go with naked Feet, and that they have the sole of the Foot hard like Horn, they say that it is very common that the Fire spares them, provided they rest the Foot upon the Coals: for the way to burn themselves is to go quick and lightly. Two men do generally walk by the side of him that passes over the Fire, and they lean with force upon his Shoulders, to hinder him from getting too quick over this proof: and it is said that this weight is so far from exposing him more to be burnt, that on the contrary he stifles the Action of the Fire under his Feet.

Some-

Sometimes the proof of the Fire is performed with Oil, or other boiling matter, into which the parties do thrust their hand. A *Frenchman*, from whom a *Siamese* had stole some Tin, was perswaded, for want of proof, to put his hand into the melted Tin; and he drew it out almost consumed. The *Siamese* being more cunning extricated himself, I know not how, without burning; and was sent away absolved; and yet six Months after, in another Suit, wherein he was engaged, he was convicted of the Robbery, wherewith the *Frenchman* had accused him. But a Thousand such like events perswade not the *Siameses* to change their form.

Another sort of Proof by Fire.

The Proof of the Water is performed after this manner. The two parties do plunge themselves into the Water at the same time, each holding by a Pole, along which they descend; and he that remains longest under Water is thought to have a good Cause. Every one therefore practises from their Youth, in this Country, to familiarize himself with Fire, and to continue a long time under Water.

The Proof of the Water.

They have another sort of Proof, which is performed by certain Pills prepared by the *Talapouts*, and accompanied with Imprecations: Both the parties do swallow them, and the token of the right Cause is to be able to keep them in the Stomach without casting them up, for they are vomitive.

A Proof by Vomits.

All these Proofs are not only before the Judges, but before the People, and if the two parties do escape equally well, or equally ill with one, they have recourse to another Trial. The King of *Siam* uses them also in his Judgments, but besides this he sometimes delivers up the parties to Tygers, and he whom the Tygers spare for a certain time is adjudged innocent. But if the Tygers devour them both, they are both esteemed guilty. If on the contrary the Tygers do meddle neither with the one nor the other, they have recourse to some other Proof, or rather they wait till the Tygers determine to devour one or both of the Parties. The Constancy with which it is reported that the *Siameses* do undergo this kind of death, is incredible in persons, who express so little Courage in War.

The various successses of these Proofs.

There are sometimes several Provinces which appeal one to the other; which multiplies the degrees of Appeal to three or four. An Appeal is permitted in all cases, but the charges thereof are always greater, as it is necessary to travel farther to plead, and in a Tribunal superior.

The Degrees of Appeal.

But when there ought to pass the sentence of Death, the decision thereof is reserved to the King alone. No other Judge than himself can order a capital punishment; if this Prince does not expressly grant him the power thereof; and there is hardly any precedent, that he grants it otherwise than to some extraordinary Judges, whom this Prince sends sometimes into the Provinces, either upon a particular case, or to execute Justice at the places of all the crimes worthy of death. All the Criminals are kept in the Prisons till the arrival of the Commissioners; and they have sometimes, as at *China*, the power of deposing and punishing the ordinary Officers with death, if they deserve it. But if the King of *Siam* grants other Commissions for his Service, or for the Service of the State, it is rare that he exempts the Commissioner from taking the assistance of the Governor of the places where he sends him.

Judgments of Death reserved to the Prince, or to some extraordinary Commissioners.

The usual Punishment of Robbery is the Condemnation to the double, and sometimes to the triple; by equal portions to the Judge and Party: But it is most singular in this, that the *Siameses* extend the Punishment of Robbery to every unjust Possessor in a Real Estate: So that whoever it evicted out of an Inheritance by Law, not only restores the Inheritance to the Party, but likewise pays the value thereof; half to the Party, and half to the Judge. But if by the King's special permission the Judge can put the Robber to death, then he can at his own discretion order either Death, or the pecuniary Mulct, but not Death and the pecuniary Mulct together.

The Punishment of Robbery extended to Estates.

But to show how dear Justice is in a Country, where Provisions are so cheap, I will add at the end of this work, a Note that was given me of the charges of Justice, where you will likewise see a particular of the form: but the charges are not the same in all the Tribunals, as I have already declared. He for whom this

this Roll is, has four inferior Jurisdictions, and he appeals to another, which appeals to the Court.

CHAP. VI.

The Functions of the Governor and Judge in the Metropolis.

The King is the *Tchaou-Meuang* of the Metropolis.

The Office of *Tummarat*, which they pronounce *Tumrai*.

The Judiciary form before the King.

The Office of *Pra-fedet*, which is pronounced *Pra-fedet*.

The Reception which the Governors gave to the King's Ambassadors, every one in his Government.

The place where the King's Ambassadors expected the day of their entrance.

IN the *Metropolis*, where there is no other *Tchaou-Meuang* than the King, the Functions of Governor and Judge are divided into two Offices: and the other Functions of the lesser Offices, which compose a Tribunal of *Tchaou-Meuang*, are distributed to the principal Officers of the State; but with greater Extent and Authority, and with higher and more pompous Titles.

The President of the Tribunal of the City of *Siam*, to whom all the Appeals of the Kingdom do go, they call *Tumrat*. He generally bears the Title of *Oc-ya*, and his Tribunal is in the King's Palace; but he follows not the King, when that Prince removes from his *Metropolis*; and then he renders Justice in a Tower, which is in the City of *Siam*, and without the inclosure of the Palace. To him alone belongs the determinative Voice; and from him there also lies an Appeal to the King, if any one will bear the expence.

In this case the Process is referred and examined by the King's Council; but in his absence to a Sentence inclusively consultative, as is practised in the Council of the *Tchaou-Meuang*. The King is present only when it is necessary that he pronounce a definitive Judgment: and according to the general form of the Kingdom, this Prince, before passing the Sentence, resumes all the opinions and debates with his Councillors, those which to him seem unjust; and some have assured me, that the present King acquires himself herein with a great deal of Ingenuity and Judgment.

The Governor of the City of *Siam* is called *Pra-fedet*, and generally also bears the Title of *Oc-ya*. His Name, which is *Baly*, is composed of the word *Pra*, which I have several times explained, and of the word *Sedet* which signifies, say some, *the King is gone*; and indeed they speak not otherwise, to say that the King is gone. But this does not sufficiently explain what the Office of *Pra-fedet* is: and in several things it appears, that they have very much lost the exact understanding of the *Baly*. M^r. Gervaise calls this Office *Pe-fedet*; I always heard it called *Pra-fedet*, and by able men, altho they write it *Pra-fedet*.

The course of the River from its Mouth to the *Metropolis*, is divided into several small Governments. The first is *Pipeli*, the second *Prepadem*, the third *Bancock*, the fourth *Talaccan*, and the fifth *Siam*. The Officers of every one of these Governments received the King's Ambassadors at the entrance into their Jurisdiction, and they left them not till the Officers of the next Jurisdiction had joyned and saluted them: and they were the particular Officers of each Government that made the Head of the Train. Besides this there were some Officers more considerable, that came to offer the King their Master's *Saluts* to the Ambassadors, at the Mouth of the River: and every day there joyned new Officers, that came to bring new Compliments to the Ambassadors: and who quitted not the Ambassadors after they had joyned them.

The King's Ambassadors arrived thus within two Leagues of *Siam*, at a place which the French called the *Tabanque*; and they waited there eight or ten days for the time of their entrance into the *Metropolis*. *Tabanque* in *Siamese* signifies the *Custom House*: and because the Officer's House, which stands at the Mouth of the River, is of *Bambou* like all the rest, the French gave the name of *Tabanque* to all the *Bambou*-houses where they lodged, from the name of the Officers House, which they had seen first of all.

The

The day therefore that the King's Ambassadors made their entrance, *Oc-pa* ^{The Governor of Siam came to fetch them.} *Prasidet* as Governour of the Metropolis came to visit, and compliment them at this pretended *Tabanque*.

C H A P. VII.

Of the State Officers, and particularly of the Tchacry, Calla-hom, and of the General of the Elephants.

AMongst the Court Officers are principally those, to whom are annexed the Functions of our Secretaries of State: but before an entrance be made into this matter, I must declare that all the chief Officers in any kind of Affairs whatever, have under them as many of those Subaltern Officers which compose the Tribunal of the *Tchaou-Menang*.

The *Tchacry* has the distribution of all the Interior polity of the Kingdom: ^{Of the Tchaou.} to him revert all the Affairs of the Provinces: All the Governours do immediately render him an Account, and do immediately receive Orders from him: he is President of the Council of State.

The *Calla-hom* has the appointment of the War: he has the care of the Fortifications, Arms, and Ammunitions: He issues out all the Orders, that concern the Armies; and he is naturally the General thereof, altho the King may name whom he pleases for General. By *Van Vlier's* Relation it appears that the Command of the Elephants belonged also to the *Calla-hom*, even without the Army. But now this is a separate Employment, as some have assured me: either for that the present King's Father, after having made use of the Office of the *Calla-hom* to gain the Throne; resolved to divide the Power thereof, or that naturally they are two distinct Offices, which may be given to a single Person.

However it be, 'tis *Oc-Pra Pipitcharatcha* corruptly called *Petratcha*, who commands all the Elephants, and all the Horses: and it is one of the greatest Employments of the Kingdom, because that the Elephants are esteemed the King of *Siam's* Principal Forces. Some there are who report that this Prince maintains Ten Thousand, but is impossible to be known, by reason that Vanity always inclines these People to Lying: and they are more vain in the matter of Elephants, than in any thing else. The Metropolis of the Kingdom of *Laos* is called *Lan-Tchang*, and its name in the Language of the Country, which is almost the same as the *Siamese*, signifies Ten Millions of Elephants. The King of *Siam* keeps therefore a very great number: and it is said that three men at least are required for the service of every Elephant: and these men, with all the Officers that command them, are under the orders of *Oc-Pra Pipitcharatcha*: who though he has only the Title of *Oc-Pra*, is yet a very great Lord. The people love him because he appears moderate; and think him invulnerable, because he expressed a great deal of Courage in some Fight against the *Peguis*: his Courage has likewise procured him the Favour of the King his Master. His Family has continued a long time in the highest Offices: is frequently allied to the Crown; and it is publicly reported that he or his Son *Oc-Louang Souracac* may pretend to it, if either of them survive the King that now Reigns. The Mother of *Oc-Pra Pipitcharatcha* was the King's Nurse, and the Mother of the first Ambassador whom we saw here: and when the King commanded the great *Barcalon*, the Brother of this Ambassador, to be bastinado'd the last time, 'twas *Oc-Louang Souracac* the Son of *Oc-Pra Pipitcharatcha* that bastinado'd him by the King's order, and in his presence; the Prince's Nurse, the Mother of the *Barcalon*, lying prostrate at his Feet, to obtain pardon for her Son:

Of the chief Officers in general.

Of the *Calla-hom*.

Of the General of the Elephants.

C H A P. VIII.

Concerning the Art of War amongst the Siameses, and of their Forces by Sea and Land.

The Siameses
not proper for
War.

THE Art of War is exceedingly ignor'd at *Siam*: the *Siameses* are little inclin'd to this Trade. The over-quick imagination of the excessive hot Countries, is not more proper for Courage, than the slow imagination of Countries extremely cold. The sight of a naked Sword is sufficient to put an hundred *Siameses* to flight; there needs only the assured Tone of an *European*, that wears a Sword at his side, or a Cane in his hand, to make them forget the most express Orders of their Superiors.

How contemptible the
men in the
Indies are as to
their Courage.

I say moreover, that every one born in the *Indies* is without Courage, although he be born of *European* Parents. And the *Portugueses* born in the *Indies* have been a real proof thereof. A society of *Dutch* Merchants found in them only the Name and the Language, and not the Bravery of the *Portugueses*: and if other *Europeans* went to seek out the *Dutch*, they would not be found more Valorous. The best constituted men are those of the Temperate Zones: and amongst these the difference of their common aliments, and of the places which they inhabit, more or less hot, dry or moist, exposed to the Winds or to the Seas, Plains or Mountains. Woods or Champains, and much more the several Governments do cause very great differences. For who doubts, for example, that the Antient *Greeks*, brought up in liberty, were incomparably more Valorous than the present *Greeks*, depressed by so long a Servitude? All these reasons do concur to effeminate the Courage of the *Siameses*, I mean the heat of the Climate, the stigmatick Aliments, and the Despotick Government.

The Siameses
abhor blood.

The Opinion of the *Metempsychosis* inspiring them with an horror of blood, deprives them likewise of the Spirit of War. They busie themselves only in making Slaves. If the *Peguins*, for example, do on one side invade the lands of *Siam*, the *Siameses* will at another place enter on the Lands of *Pegu*, and both Parties will carry away whole Villages into Captivity.

Now in fighting
they disguise the
design of killing
their Enemies.

But if the Armies meet, they will not shoot directly one against the other, but higher: and yet as they endeavour to make these random Shots to fall back upon the Enemies, to the end that they may be overtaken therewith, if they do not retreat, one of the two Parties do's not long defer from taking flight, upon perceiving it never so little to rain Darts or Bullets. But if the design be to stop the Troops that come upon them, they will shoot lower than it is necessary; to the end that if the Enemies approach, the fault may be their own in coming within the reach of being wounded or slain. Kill not is the order, which the King of *Siam* gives his Troops, when he sends them into the Field: which cannot signifie that they should not kill absolutely, but that they shoot not directly upon the Enemy.

How the King
of Singor was
taken by a
Frenchman.

Some have upon this account informed me a thing, which in my opinion, will appear most incredible. 'Tis of a provincial named *Cyprian*, who is still at *Surat* in the French Company's Service, if he has not quitted it, or if he is not lately dead: the name of his Family I know not. Before his entrance into the Companies service, he had served some time in the King of *Siam's* Army in quality of Canonier; and because he was prohibited from shooting strait, he doubted not that the *Siamese* General would betray the King his Master. This Prince sending afterwards some Troops against the *Tchao-Menang*, or if you will, against the King of *Singor*, on the western Coast of the Gulph of *Siam*, *Cyprian* wearied with seeing the Armies in view, which attempted no persons life, determin'd one night to go alone to the Camp of the Rebels, and to fetch the King of *Singor* into his Tent. He took him indeed, and brought him to the *Siamese* General, and so terminated a War of above twenty years. The King

of *Siam* intended to recompence this service of *Cyprian* with a quantity of *Sapan-wood*; but by some intrigue of Court he got nothing, and retir'd to *Surat*.

Now though the *Siameses* appear to us so little proper for War, yet they cease not to make it frequently and advantageously, by reason that their Neighbours are neither more potent nor more valiant than them.

The King of *Siam* has no other Troops maintained than his foreign Guard, of which I will speak in the sequel. 'Tis true that the Chevalier de *Fourbin* had showed the Exercise of Arms to four hundred *Siameses*, which we found at *Bancoek*: and that after he had quitted this Kingdom, an Englishman, who had been a Sergeant in the Garrison of *Madraspatan*, on the Coast of *Coromandel*, showed this same exercise, which he had learnt under the Chevalier de *Fourbin*, to about eight hundred other *Siameses*, to show the King of *Siam* that the Chevalier de *Fourbin* was not necessary to him. But all these Soldiers have no other pay, than the Exemption from the six Months Service for some of their Family. And as they cannot easily maintain themselves from their own Houses, by reason they receive no money, they remain at their own Habitations; the four hundred about *Bancoek*, and the other eight hundred at *Leervo*, or thereabouts. Only for the security of *Bancoek* some Detachments went thither by turns to keep a continual Guard, and the rest being thereabouts might render themselves in case of an Alarm. But according to the common practice of the Kingdom of *Siam*, the Garrisons which it may have, are composed of persons, who serve in this by six Months, as they should serve in another thing; and who are relieved by others when they have served their full time.

The Kingdom of *Siam* being very strong by its impetrable Woods, and by the great number of Channels, wherewith it is interspersed, and in fine by the annual Inundation of six Months, the *Siameses* would not hitherto have places well fortified for fear of losing them, and not being able to retake them; and this is the reason they gave me thereof. The Castles they have would hardly sustain the first shock of our Soldiers; and though they be small and ugly, because they would have them such, yet is it necessary to employ the skill of the *Europeans* to delineate them.

'Tis some years since the King of *Siam* designing to make a wooden Fort on the Frontier of *Pegu*, had no able a person to whom he could entrust the care thereof, than to one named Brother *Rene Charbonneau*, who after having been a Servant of the Mission of *S^t. Lazarus* at *Paris*, had passed to the Service of the Foreign Missions, and was gone to *Siam*. Brother *Rene*, who by his Industry knew how to let blood, and give a Remedy to a sick Person (for it is by such like charitable Employments, and by some presents, that the Missionaries are permitted and loved in this Country) defended himself as much as he could from making this Fort, protesting that he was not capable: but in short he could not prevent rendering obedience, when it was signified to him that the King of *Siam* absolutely requir'd it. He was afterwards three or four years Governor of *Jonsalam* by Commission, and with great approbation: and because he desired to return to the City of *Siam* to his Wife's Relations, which are *Portugueses*, Mr. *Billi*, the Master of Mr. de *Chanment's* Palace, succeeded him in the Employment of *Jonsalam*.

The *Siameses* have not much Artillery. A *Portuguese* of *Macao*, who died in their service, cast them some pieces of Cannon; but as for them, I question whether they know how to make any moderately good; though some have informed me that they have hammered some out of cold Iron.

As they have no Horses (for what is two thousand Horse at most, which 'tis reported that the King of *Siam* keeps?) their Armies consist only in Elephants, and in Infantry, naked and ill armed, after the mode of the Country. Their order of Battle and Encampment is thus.

They range themselves in three lines, each of which is composed of three great square Battalions; and the King, or the General whom he names in his absence, stands in the middle Battalion, which he composes of the best Troops, for the security of his Person. Every particular Captain of a Battalion keeps himself also in the midst of the Battalion which he commands: and if the nine

The *Siameses* have little to fear from their Neighbours. The King of *Siam* has no other Troops maintain'd than his foreign Guard.

The Country of *Siam* is very strong without Ports.

The *Siameses* know not how to make a wooden Fort.

Of their Artillery.

In what their Armies consist, and of their Encampments.

- Battalions are too big, they are each divided into nine less; with the same symmetry as the whole body of the Army.
- Elephants of War.** The Army being thus ranged, every one of the nine Battalions has sixteen male Elephants in the rear. They call them Elephants of War: and each of these Elephants carries his particular standard, and is accompanied with two female Elephants; but as well females as males are mounted each with three armed Men; and besides this the Army has some Elephants with Baggage. The *Siameses* report that the female Elephants are only for the dignity of the males; but as I have already declared in the other part, it would be very difficult always to govern the males without the Company of the females.
- The Artillery begins the Fight.** The Artillery, at the places where the River grows shallow, is carried on Waggon, drawn by Buffalo's, or Oxen, for it has no carriage. It begins the Fight, and if it ends it not, then they place themselves within reach to make use of the small shot, and Arrows, after the manner as I have explained, but they never fall on with vigour enough, nor defend themselves with confidence enough, to come to a close Fight.
- The *Siameses* easie to break, and to rally.** They break themselves and fly into Woods; but ordinarily they rally with the same facility, as they are broken; and if on some occasion, as in the late Conspiracy of the *Macassars*, it is absolutely necessary to stand firm: they can promise themselves to retain the Soldiers, only by placing some Officers behind, to kill those that shall fly. I have elsewhere related how these *Macassars* made use of Opium to endow themselves with Courage: 'tis a custom practised principally by the *Ragipouts*, and the *Melays*; but not by the *Siameses*: the *Siameses* would be afraid to become too Courageous.
- Elephants not proper for War.** They very much rely upon the Elephants in Combats; though this Animal for want of Bit or Bridle, cannot be securely governed, and he frequently turns upon his own Masters when he is wounded. Moreover he so exceedingly dreads the fire, that he is never almost accustomed thereunto. Yet they exercise them to carry; and to see fired from their back little pieces about three foot long, and about a pound of Ball; and *Bernier* reports that this very practice is observed in the *Mogul's* Country.
- The *Siameses* incapable of Sieges.** As for Sieges they are wholly incapable thereof, for men that dare not set upon the Enemies when in view, will not vigorously attack a place never so little Fortified, but only by Treachery, in which they are very cunning, or by Famine, if the Besieged cannot have provision.
- Their weakness by Sea.** They are yet more feeble by Sea than by Land. Not without much ado the King of *Siam* hath five or six very small Ships, which he principally makes use of for Merchandize; and sometimes he arms them as Privateers against those of his Neighbours, with whom he is at War. But the Officers and Seamen, on whom he confides, are Foreigners; and till these latter times he had chosen *English* and *Portuguese*: but within these few years he hath employed some *French*. The King of *Siam's* Intention is, that his Corsairs should kill no person, no more than his Land Forces, but that they use all the Tricks imaginable to take some Prizes. In his War at Sea, he proposes to himself only some Reprizals from some of his Neighbours, from whom he believes himself to have received some injury in Trade. And the contrivances succeed whilst his Enemies are not in any distrust. Besides this he has fifty or sixty Gallies, whose Anchors, I have said are of Wood. They are only moderate Boats for a Bridge, which do every one carry fifty or sixty men to Row and to Fight. These men do fight by turns, as in every thing else: There is only one to each Oar; and he is obliged to Row standing, because the Oar is so short, for lightness sake, that it would not touch the water, if not held almost perpendicular. These Gallies only coast it along the Gulph of *Siam*.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Barcalon, and of the Revenues.

THe *Pra-Clang*, or by a corruption of the *Portuguese*, the *Barcalon*, is the Officer which has the appointment of the Commerce, as well within as without the Kingdom. He is the Superintendent of the King of *Siam's* Magazines, or if you will, his chief Factor. His name is composed of the *Balie* word *Pra*, which I have so often discoursed of, and of the word *Clang*, which signifies Magazine. He is the Minister of the foreign affairs, because they almost all relate to Commerce; and 'tis to him that the fugitive Nations at *Siam* address themselves in their affairs, because 'tis only the liberty of Trade that formerly invited them thither. In a word, it is the *Barcalon* that receives the Revenues of the Cities.

The King of *Siam's* Revenues are of two sorts, Revenues of the Cities, and Revenues of the Country. The Country Revenues are received by *Oe-ya Pol-latep*, according to some, or *Forethep*, according to Mr. *Gervaise*.

They are all reduced to the Heads following.

1. On Forty Fathom Square of cultivated Lands, a *Mayon* or quarter of a *Tical* by year: but this Rent is divided with the *Tchaon-Menang* where there is one; and it is never well paid to the King on the Frontiers. Besides this, the Law of the Kingdom is, that whoever ploughs not his ground pays nothing, though it be by his own negligence that he reaps nothing. But the present King of *Siam* to force his Subjects to work, has exacted this duty from those that have possessed Lands for a certain time, although they omit to cultivate them. Yet this is executed only in the places where his Authority is absolute. He loved nothing so much, as to see Strangers come to settle in his States, there to manure those great uncultivated Spaces, which without comparison do make the most considerable part thereof: in this case he would be liberal of distilled groinds, and of Beasts to cultivate them, though they had been cleared and prepared for Tillage.

2. On Boats or *Balons*, the Natives of the Country pay a *Tical* for every Fathom in length. Under this Reign they have added that every *Balm* or Boat above six Cubits broad should pay six *Ticals*, and that Foreigners should be obliged to this duty, as well as the Natives of the Country. This duty is levied like a kind of Custom at certain places of the River, and amongst others at *Tchainat*, four Leagues above *Siam*, where all the Streams unite.

3. Customs on whatever is imported or exported by Sea. Besides which, the body of the Ship pays something in proportion to its Capacities, like the *Balons*.

4. On *Arak* or Rice-Brandy, or rather on every Furnace where it is made, which they call *Taou-laon*, the People of the Country do pay a *Tical* per *Annum*. This Duty has been doubled under this Reign, and is exacted on the Natives of the Country, and on Strangers alike. 'Tis likewise added, that every Seller of *Arak* by re-tail, should pay a *Tical* a year, and every Seller by whole-sale, a *Tical* per *Annum* for every great Pot, the size of which I find no otherwise described in the Note which was given me.

5. On the Fruit called *Durion*, for every Tree already bearing, or not bearing On *Durion*. Fruit, two *Mayons* or half a *Tical* per annum.

6. On every Tree of *Betel*, a *Tical* per annum.

7. On every *Arekier* they formerly paid three Nuts of *Arek* in kind: under this Reign, they pay six.

8. Revenues entirely new, or established under this Reign; are in the first New Imposts, place, a certain Duty on a School of Recreation permitted at *Siam*. The Tribute which the *Oe-ya Meen* pays, is almost of the same Nature, but I know not whether it is not ancienter than the former. In the second place, on every Tree,

Tree, half a *Tical per Annum*; and in the third place on Orange-Trees. Mango-Trees, Mangoutaniers and Pimentiers, for each, a *Tical per Annum*. There is no duty on Pepper, by reason that the King would have his Subjects addit themselves more to plant it.

A Demefin reserved to the King.

9. This Prince has in several places of his States some Gardens and Lands, which he causes to be cultivated, as his particular demefin, as well by his Slaves, as by the fix Months Service. He causes the Fruits to be gathered and kept on the places, for the maintenance of his House, and for the nourishment of his Slaves, his Elephants, his Horses, and other Cattle; and thereof he sells.

10. A Casual Revenue is the Presents which this Prince receives, as well as all the Officers of his Kingdom, the Legacies which the Officers bequeath him at their death, or which he takes from their Succession; and in fine, the extraordinary Duties, which he takes from his Subjects on several occasions: as for the Maintenance of Foreign Ambassadors, to which the Governors, into whose Jurisdiction the Ambassadors do pass, or sojourn, are obliged to contribute; and for the building of Forts, and other publick works, an expence which he levies on the People, amongst whom these works are made.

Confiscations and Fines. Six Months Service.

11. The Revenues of Justice do consist in Confiscations and Fines.

12. Six Months service of every one of his Subjects *per Annum*: a Service which he or his Officers frequently extend much further, who alone discharge it from every thing, and from which there remains to him a good Increase. For in certain places this Service is converted into a payment made in Rice, or in Sapan-wood, or Lignum-aloes, or Saltpetre, or in Elephants, or in Beasts Skins, or in Ivory, or in other Commodities: and in fine, this Service is sometimes esteemed and paid in ready Money; and it is for the ready Money that the Rich are exempted. Anciently this Service was esteemed at a *Tical* a Month, because that one *Tical* is sufficient to maintain one Man: and this computation serves likewise as an assessment on the days Labour of the Workmen, which a particular Person employs. They amount to two *Ticals* a Month at least, by reason that it is reckoned that a Workman must in 6 Months gain his Maintenance for the whole year; seeing that he can get nothing the other fix Months; that he serves the Prince. The Prince now extorts two *Ticals* a Month for the exemption from the six Months Service.

Commerce, a Revenue extraordinary or casual.

13. His other Revenues do arise from the Commerce, which he exercises with his Subjects and Foreigners. He has carried it to such a degree, that Merchandize is now no more the Trade of particular persons at *Siam*. He is not contented with selling by Whole-sale, he has some Shops in the Bazzars or Markets, to sell by Re-tail.

Cotton-cloth.

The principal thing that he sells to his Subjects is Cotton-cloth: he sends them into his Magazines of the Provinces. Heretofore his Predecessors and he sent them thither only every Ten Years, and a moderate quantity, which being sold, particular persons had liberty to make Commerce thereof; now he continually furnishes them, he has in his Magazines more than he can possibly sell; and it sometimes happens that to vend more, that he has forced his Subjects to cloth their Children before the accustomed Age. Before the *Hollanders* came into the Kingdom of *Laos*, and into others adjacent, the King of *Siam* did there make the whole Commerce of Linnen with a considerable profit.

The Galin or Tin.

All the *Galin* is his, and he sells it as well to Strangers as to his own Subjects, excepting that which is dug out of the Mines of *Jonsalam* on the Gulph of *Bengal*: for this being a remote Frontier, he leaves the Inhabitants in their ancient Rights, so that they enjoy the Mines which they dig, paying a small profit to this Prince.

Ivory, Saltpetre, Lead, Sapan.

All the Ivory comes to the King, his Subjects are obliged to vend him all that they sell, and Strangers can buy only at his Magazine. The Trade of Saltpetre, Lead and Sapan, belongs also to the King: they can buy and sell them only at his Magazine, whether one be a *Siamese* or Stranger.

Arak.

Arak, a great deal of which is exported out of the Kingdom, can be sold to Foreigners only by the King: and for this end he buys some of his Subjects, besides that which he has from his particular Revenues.

Pro-

Prohibited Goods, as Powder, Sulphur and Arms, can be bought or sold at *Siam*, only at the King's Magazine.

As to the Skins of Beasts, this Prince is obliged, by a Treaty made with the *Hollanders*, to sell them all to them; and for this purpose he buys them of his Subjects: but his Subjects do convey away a great many, which the *Hollanders* buy of them in secret.

The rest of the Commerce at *Siam* is permitted to all, as that of Rice, Fish, Salt, Brown Sugar, Sugar-Candy, Ambergreece, Wax, the Gum with which Varnish is made, Mother of Pearl, those edible Birds-Nests which come from *Tonquin* and *Cochinchina*, which *Navarrete* reports to be made of the Sea-froth in some Rocks, by a kind of small Sea-Birds, which resemble Swallows, Gumme Gutte, Incense, Oyl, Coco, Cotton, Cinnamon, Nenuphar, which is not exactly like ours; Cassia, Dates, and several other things, as well the growth of the Kingdom, as brought from abroad.

Every one may make and sell Salt; fish and hunt, as I have declared, and without paying any thing to the King. It is true, that the necessary Policy is used in Fishing; and *Oo-Pra Tainam*, who receives the particular Revenues of the River, hinders those ways of Fishing, which destroy too much Fish at once.

The King of *Siam* has never been well paid his Revenues in lands remote from his Court. 'Tis said that the ready Money that he formerly received, amounted to Twelve hundred thousand Livres, and that what he now gets amounts to Six hundred thousand Crowns, or to Two Millions. 'Tis a difficult thing to know exactly: all that I can assert is, that in this Country it is reported (as a thing very considerable, and which seems Hyperbolic) that the present King of *Siam* has augmented his Revenues a Million.

Prohibited Goods.
Skins of Beasts.

The Commerce free to all persons.

Salt, Fishing, Hunting.

To what Sum the King of Siam's Revenues amount.

CHAPTER X.

Of the Royal Seal, and of the Maha Obarat.

There is no Chancellor at *Siam*. Every Officer that has the Power of giving the Sentences, or Orders in Writing, which they call *Tara* in general, has a Seal which the King gives him: and the King himself has his Royal Seal, which he commits to no person whatever, and of which he makes use for the Letters he writes, and for whatever proceeds immediately from him. The Figure which is in the Seals, is not hollow, but in Relief. The Seal is rub'd over with a kind of Red Ink, and is printed on the Paper with the Hand. An inferior Officer takes this Pains; but 'tis the duty of the Officer to whom the Seal belongs, to pluck it with his own Hand from the Print.

After several remarks, which I have made, it seems to me, that whatever is done in the King of *Siam's* Name has no Power, if it is not done at the place where this King actually resides. Certain reasons have hindered, why they have not certainly inform'd me thereof. However, it is certain, that for the reason which I have alledged, or for some other, there is at *Siam* as it were a Vice-Roy, who represents the King, and performs the Regal Functions in the King's Absence; as when this Prince is at War. This Officer is called *Maha Obarat*, as it was given me in writing, or *Ommarat*, according to the Abbot de Choisy, and M^r. Gervaise. And the Abbot de Choisy adds, that the *Maha Obarat* has a right of sitting down in the King's Presence, a Circumstance which some have inform'd me to be peculiar to another Officer, of whom I shall speak in the sequel. At present they give him the Title of *Pa-ya*, and they do thereunto add the word *Tchaon*, which signifies Lord; *Tchaon Pa-ya Maha Omrat*: Sometimes he has only the Title of *Oc-ya*, as in *Viet's* Relation, where he is called *Oc-ya Omrat*. He is thereunto qualified as Chief of the Nobility, which signifies nothing, but the first Officer of the Kingdom:

There is no Chancellor at Siam. The King gives not his Seal to any person.

Of the Maha Obarat.

CHAPTER.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the Palace, and of the King of Siam's Guards.

Officers with-
in and with-
out.

IT now remains for me to speak of the King, and of his House. This Prince's Palace has its Officers within, and its Officers without; but so different in dignity, that an *Oc-Mening* within commands all the *Oc-ya* without. They call Officers within, not only those which lodge always in the Palace, but those whose functions are exercised in the Palace: And they call Officers without the Palace, not all the Officers of the Kingdom, which have no Function in the Palace, but those which having no Function in the Palace; yet have not any without which respects not the Service of the Palace. Thus the *Spaniards* have Servants, which they call *de Escalera arriba*, and others which they call *de Escalera abajo*, that is to say Servants at the top of the Stairs, or which may go up the Stairs to their Master, and to those to whom their Master sends them, and others who wait always at the bottom of the Stairs.

Three Inclo-
sures in the
King of Siam's
Palace.

The King of Siam's Palaces have three Inclosures: and that of the City of Siam has them so distant one from the other, that the space thereof appears like vast Courts. All that the inward Clofe includes, viz. the King's Apartment, some Court, and some Garden, is called *Vang* in Siamese. The whole Palace with all its Inclosures is called *Prassat*, though *Viet* in the Title of his Relation translates the word *Prassat* by that of Throne. The Siamese neither enter into the *Vang*, nor depart thence without prostrating themselves, and they pass not before the *Prassat*. And if sometimes the stream of the Water carries them, and forces them to pass thereby, they are pelted with showers of Pease, which the King's Servants shoot over them with Trunks. Mr. de Chassant and the King's Ambassadors landed, and left their Umbrella's at the first entrance of the *Prassat*.

Of the *Oc-ya*
Vang.

The *Oc-ya Vang* commands in the *Vang*; and in him reunites all the Functions which respect the Reparations of the Palace, the Order which must be observed in the Palace, and the Expence which is made for the Maintenance of the King, of his Wives and of his Eunuchs, and of all those whom this Prince maintains in the *Vang*. 'Twas the *Oc-ya Vang*, who, after the Example of all the other Governours, which had received the King's Ambassadors at the entrance of their Government, came to receive them at the Gate of the *Vang*; and who introduced them to the Audience of the King his Master.

The Gates of
the Palace, and
of the precau-
tions with
which persons
are admitted.

The Gates of the Palace are always shut; and behind each stands a Porter, who has some Arms, but who instead of bearing them, keeps them in his Lodge near the Gate. If any one knocks, the Porter advertises the Officer, who commands in the first Inclosure, and without whose permission no person enters in, nor goes out: but no person enters armed, nor after having drunk *Arak*, to assure himself that no drunken man enters therein. Wherefore the Officer views, and smells the breath of all those that must enter therein.

The *Mening*
Tchion.

This Office is double, and those that are in it do serve alternately and by day. The days of Service they continue twenty four whole hours in the Palace, and the other days they may be at home. Their Title is *Oc-Mening Tchion*, or rather *Pra Mening Tchion*: for at the Palace before the word *Mening* there are some who put the word *Pra* instead of *Oc*, though some have told me that it is *Oc-Mening*, and not *Pra-Mening* that he must be always called. 'Twas one of these *Mening Tchions* who brought the first Compliment from the King of Siam to the Ambassadors, when they were in the Road; and who stayed constantly with them after they were landed, as Mr. Torpff, continued always with the Ambassador of Siam.

Painted Arms.

Between the two first Inclosures, and under a Pent-house, is a small number of Soldiers unarmed and stooping. They are those *Kenbat* or *Painted Arms*, of whom I have spoken. The Officer who commands them immediately, and who is a Painted-Arm himself, is called *Oncarac*, and he and they are the Prince his Execu-

Executioners; as the Officers and Soldiers of the *Pretorian Cohorts*, were the Executioners of the *Roman Emperors*. But at the same time they omit not to watch the Prince's person; for in the Palace there is wherewith to arm them in case of need. They row the *Balon* of State, and the King of *Siam* has no other Foot-guard. Their Employment is hereditary, like all the rest of the Kingdom; and the ancient Law imports that they ought not to exceed six hundred: But this must doubtless be understood that there ought to be no more than six hundred for the Palace: for there must needs be many more in the whole extent of the State; because that the King, as I have said elsewhere, gives thereof to a very great number of Officers.

But this Prince is not contented with this Guard on days of Ceremony, as was that of the first Audience of the King's Ambassadors. On such occasions he causes his Slaves to be armed; and if their number is not sufficient, the Slaves of the principal Officers are armed. He gives to them all some Muffin Shirts dyed red, Muskets, or Bows, or Lances, and Pots of gilded wood on their Heads, which for this purpose are taken out of the Magazine: and the quantity of which, in my opinion, determines the number of these Soldiers of show. They formed a double Rank at the reception of *M^r. de Chaumont*; and so soon as he was past, those which he had left behind, made haste to get before by the by-ways, to go to fill up the vacant places which were left for them. In our time they marched by the sides of the Ambassadors, till they stopt up the space through which they were to pass. We also found part of these Slaves prostrate before the little Stairs, which goes up to the Hall of Audience. Some held those little useless Trumpets, which I have spoken of; and others had before them those little Drums, which they never beat. The *Mening Teshon* are the *Nai* of all these Slaves; and these Slaves row the *Balons* of the King's retinue, and are moreover employed on several works.

Anciently the Kings of *Siam* had a *Japponeſe Guard*, composed of six hundred men: but because these six hundred men alone, could make the whole Kingdom to tremble when they pleased, the present King's Father, after having made use of them to invade the Throne, found out a way to rid himself of them, more by policy than force.

The King of *Siam*'s Horse-guard is composed of Men from *Laos*, and another neighbouring Country, the chief City whereof is called *Meen*: and as the *Meen* and *Laos* do serve him by six Months, he makes this Guard as numerous as he pleases, and as many Horses as he would employ therein.

Oc-Coune Ran Patchi commands this Guard on the right hand: His Son is in *France*, and has for some years learnt the Trade of a Fountain-maker at *Triannon*. *Oc-Coune Pipitcharatcha*, or as the People say, *Oc-Coune Petratcha*, commands the half of this Guard, which serves on the left hand: but over these two Officers *Oc-ya Lao* commands the Guard of the *Laos*, and *Oc-ya Meen* the Guard of the *Meen*: and this *Oc-ya Meen* is a different person from him that prostitutes lewd Women.

Besides this the King of *Siam* has a foreign standing Horse guard, which consists in an Hundred and Thirty Gentlemen: but neither they, nor the *Meen*, nor the *Laos*, do ever keep Guard in the Palace. Notice is given them to accompany the King when he goes out, and thus all this is esteemed the exterior Service, and not the interior Service of the Palace.

This foreign Guard consists, first in two Companies of thirty *Moors* each, Natives, or originally descended from the States of the *Mogul*, of an excellent Meen, but accounted Cowards. Secondly, in a Company of twenty *Chinese Tartars* armed with Bows and Arrows, and formidable for their Courage; and lastly in two Companies of Twenty five Men each, Pagans of the true *India*, habited like the *Moors*, which are called *Rasbouts*, or *Raggibouts*, who boast themselves to be of the Royal blood, and whose Courage is very famous, though it be only the effect of Opium, as I have before remarked.

The King of *Siam* supplies this whole Guard with Arms, and with Horses: What it costs, and besides this every *Moor* costs him three *Catins* and twelve *Tails* a year, that is to say 540 *Livres*, or thereabouts, and a red Stuff Vest; and every of the

A Guard of
Slaves for a
Show.

The King of
Siam has no
standing *Jap-
poneſe Guard*.

The Horse-
Guard from
Meen, and *La-
os*.

A Foreign
Horse-Guard.

Of what it is
composed.

two *Moorish* Captains five *Cats* and twelve *Tails*, or 840 *Livres*, and a *Scarlet Vest*. The *Ragbouts* are maintained according to the same rate; but every *Chinefe Tartar* costs him only six *Tails*, or 45 *Livres* a year, and their Captain fifteen *Tails*, or 112 *Livres*, ten *Sols*.

The Elephants
and Horses of
the Palace.

In the first Inclosures are likewise the Stables of the Elephants and Horses, which the King of *Siam* esteems the best, and which are called Elephants and Horses by Name: because that this King gives them a Name, as he gives to all the Officers within his Palace, and to the important Officers of the State, which in this are very much distinguished from the Officers on whom he imposes none. He that hath the care of the Horses, either for their maintenance, or to train them up, and who is as it were the chief Quarry, is called *Oc-Louang Tchoumpon*; his *Belai*, or Lieutenant is *Oc-Mening Si Sing Tong Pachat*; but he alone has the Privilege of speaking to the King: Neither his *Belai* nor his other inferior Officers do speak unto him.

The Elephants
of Name.

The Elephants of Name are treated with more or less Dignity, according to the more or less honourable Name they bear; but every one of them has several Men at his Service. They stir not out, as I have elsewhere declared, without trappings; and because that all the Elephants of Name cannot be kept within the Compaſs of the Palace, there are some which have their Stables close by.

Of the White
Elephant.

These People have naturally so great an esteem of Elephants, that they are persuaded that an Animal so noble, so strong, and so docile, can be animated only with an illustrious Soul, which has formerly been in the body of some Prince, or of some great Person: but they have yet a much higher Idea of the White Elephants. These Animals are rare, and are found, say they, only in the Woods of *Siam*. They are not altogether White, but of a flesh colour, and for this reason it is that *Viet* in the Title of his Relation has said, the White and Red Elephant. The *Siamers* do call this colour *Penak*, and I doubt not that it is this colour inclining to White and moreover so rare in this Animal, which has procur'd it the Veneration of those People to such a degree, as to persuade them what they report thereof, that a Soul of some Prince is always lodged in the body of a White Elephant, whether Male or Female it matters not.

The Esteem
which the Si-
amers do make
of the White
colour in Ani-
mals.

By the same reason of the colour, White Horses are those which the *Siamers* most esteem. I proceed to give a proof thereof. The King of *Siam* having one of his Horses sick, intreated Mr. Vincent, that Physician which I have frequently mentioned, to prescribe him some Remedy. And to persuade him to it (for he well knew that the *European* Physicians debated not themselves to meddle with Beasts) he acquainted him that the Horse was *Mogol* (that is to say White) of four faces by Sire and Dam, without any mixture of *Indian* blood; and that had it not been for this consideration he would not have made him this request. The *Indians* call the White, *Mogols*, which they distinguish into *Mogols of Asia*, and *Mogols of Europe*. Therefore whence soever this respect is for the White colour, as well in Men as in Beasts, I could discover no other reason at *Siam*, than that of the veneration which the *Siamers* have for the White Elephants. Next to the White they most esteem those which are quite Black, because they are likewise very rare; and they dye some of this colour, when they are not naturally Black enough. The King of *Siam* always keeps a White Elephant in his Palace, which is treated like the King of all those Elephants, which this Prince maintains. That which Mr. de Chassagnon saw in this Country, was dead, as I have said, when we arrived there. There was born another as they reported on the 9th of December 1687. a few days before our departure: but this Elephant was still in the Woods, and received no Visit, and so we saw no White Elephant. Other Relations have informed us how this Animal is served with Vessels of Gold.

The King of
Siam's Balans.

The Care of the King's Balans, and of his Gallies, belongs to the *Calla-hom*. Their Arsenal is over against the Palace, the River running between. There every one of these Barges is lock'd up in a Trench, whereinto runs the Water of the River; and each Trench is shut up in an Inclosure made of Wood, and covered. These Inclosures are locked up, and besides this a person watches there at Night. The Balans of ordinary Service are not so adorned as those for
Cere-

Ceremony; and amongst those for Ceremony there are some which the King gives to his Officers for these occasions only: for those which he allows them for ordinary Ceremonies, are less curious and fine.

C H A P. XII.

Of the Officers which nearest approach the King of Siam's Person.

IN the *Yang* are some of those single Halls which I have described; in which the Officers do meet, either for their Functions, or to make their Court, or to wait the Orders of the Prince.

The usual place where he shows himself unto them, is the Hall, where he gave Audience to the King's Ambassadors; and he shows himself only through a Window, as did anciently the King of *China*. This Window is from a higher Chamber, which has this prospect over the Hall, and which may be said to be of the first Story. It is nine Foot high or thereabouts; and it was necessary to place three steps underneath, to raise me high enough to present the King's Letter to the King of *Siam*. This Prince chose rather to cause these three steps to be put, than to see himself again obliged to stoop, to take the King's Letter from my hand, as he had been obliged to do, to take that which Mr. de *Chammon* deliver'd him. 'Tis evident by the Relation of Mr. de *Chammon*, that he had in his hands a kind of Gold Cup, which had a very long handle of the same matter; to the end that he might use it to give the King's Letter to the King of *Siam*. He did it, but he would not take this Cup by the handle to raise the Letters, so that it was necessary that the King of *Siam* should stoop out of the Window to receive it. 'Tis with the same Cup, that the Officers of this Prince deliver him every thing that he receives from their hands. At the two Corners of the Hall which are at the sides of this Window, are two doors about the height of the Windows, and two pair of very narrow Stairs to ascend. For the Furniture there is only three Umbrella's, one before the Window with nine rounds, and two with seven rounds on both sides of the Window. The Umbrella is in this Country as the *Daiz*, or Canopy is in *France*.

'Tis in this Hall that the King of *Siam*'s Officers, which if you please, may be named from his Chamber, or rather his Anti-chamber, do expect his Orders. He has Forty four young men, the oldest of which hardly exceeds twenty five years of Age: the *Siameses* do call them *Mahatlek*, the *Europeans* have called them Pages. These Forty four Pages therefore are divided into four Bands, each consisting of eleven: the two first are on the right hand, and do prostrate themselves in the Hall at the King's right hand; the two others are on the left hand, and do prostrate themselves on the left hand. This Prince gives them every one a Name and a Sabre; and they carry his Orders to the Pages without, which are numerous, and which have no Name, that is imposed on them by the King. The *Siameses* do call them *Calaang*, and 'tis these *Calaangs* that the King ordinarily sends into the Provinces upon Commissions, whether ordinary, or extraordinary.

Besides this the Forty four Pages within have their Functions regulated; Some, for example, do serve Betel to the King, others take care of his Arms, others do keep his Books, and when he pleases they read in his presence.

This Prince is curious to the highest degree. He caused *Q. Carinus* to be translated into *Siamese*, whilst we were there, and has since order'd several of our Histories to be translated. He understands the States of *Europe*; and I doubt not thereof, because that once, as he gave me occasion to inform him that the Empire of *Germany* is Elective, he asked me whether besides the Empire and Poland,

In what place of the Palace the Courtiers wait.
How the King of Siam shows himself to them.

The King of Siam's Pages.

Their Functions.

How the King of Siam loves Reading.

Poland, there was any other Elective State in Europe? And I heard him pronounce the word *Polonia*, of which I had not spoken to him. Some have ascribed me that he has frequently asserted, that the Art of Ruling is not inspired, and that with great Experience and Reading he perceived that he was not yet perfect in understanding it. But he design'd principally to study it from the History of the King: he is desirous of all the News from France; and so soon as his Ambassadors were arriv'd, he retain'd the third with him, until he had read their Relation to him from one end to the other.

The Officers which command the Pages within.

To return to the Forty-four Pages, Four Officers command them; who, because they so nearly approach the Prince, are in great esteem, but yet not in an equal degree: for there is a great difference from the first to the second, from the second to the third, and from the third to the fourth. They bear only the Title of *Oc-Meung*, or of *Pra-Meung*: *Meung Vai*, *Meung Sarapet*, *Meung Semungchai*, *Meung Si*. The Sabres and Poniards which the King gives them are adorned with some precious Stones. All four are very considerable *Nai*, having a great many subaltern Officers under them; and though they have only the Title of *Meung*, they cease not to be Officers in chief. The *Pa-ya*, the *Oc-pa*, the *Oc-pa*, and the other Titles are not always subordinate to them, only the one must command more persons than the other. In a word, 'twas *Meung Si* which accompany'd *Meung Tchian* on Board our Ships, to bring to the King's Ambassadors the first Compliment from the King of Siam, and it was to him that *Meung Tchian*, tho' higher in dignity, gave the precedence and the word; because that *Meung Si* was three or four years older, but the eldest of both was not thirty.

Of the single Officer which prostrates not himself before the King of Siam.

Whilst the Ambassadors were at Audience, there was in one place an Officer, whom we perceived not, who alone, as they informed me, has the Privilege of not prostrating himself before the King his Master; and this renders his Office very honourable. I forgot to write down his Title in my Memoirs. He always has his Eyes fixed upon this Prince, to receive his Orders, which he understands by certain Signs, and which he signifies by Signs to the other Officers which are without the Hall. Thus when the Audience was ended, I would say when the King had done speaking to us, this Prince, in that silence which is profound, gave some Signal, to which we gave no heed; and immediately at the bottom of the Hall, and in an high place, which is not visible, was heard a tinkling Noise, like that of a Timbrel. This Noise was accompany'd with a Blow, which was ever and anon struck on a Drum, which is hung up under a Pent-house without the Hall, and which for being very great, renders its sound grave and Majestic; it is cover'd with an Elephant's Skin: yet no person made any motion, till that the King, whose Chair an invisible hand did by little and little draw back, removed himself from the window, and closed the Shutters thereof; and then the Noise of the tinkling and of the great Drum ceased.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Women of the Palace, and of the Officers of the Wardrobe.

The King of Siam's Chamber.

AS to the King of Siam's Chamber, the true Officers thereof are Women, 'tis they only that have a Privilege of entering therein. They make his Bed, and dress his Meat; they cloath him, and wait on him at Table: but none but himself touches his Head when he is attir'd, nor puts any thing over his Head. The Pourveyors carry the Provisions to the Eunuchs, and they give them to the Women; and she which plays the Cook, uses Salt and Spices only by weight, thereby never to put in more nor less: A practice, which, in my opinion, is only a Rule of the Physicians, by reason of the King's unhealthy disposition, and not an ancient custom of the Palace.

The

The Women do never stir out but with the King, nor the Eunuchs without express Order. 'Tis reported that he has eight or ten Eunuchs only, as well white as black. The late Queen, who was both his Wife and his Sister, was called *Nang Achamahisii*. It is not easie to know the King's Name, they carefully and superstitiously conceal it, for fear lest any Enchantment should be made on his Name. And others report, that their Kings have no Name till after their death, and that it is their Successor which names them, and this would be more certain against the pretended Sorceries.

Of the late Queen his Wife and his Sister.
Of the Princess his only Daughter.
Of the King of Siam's only Daughter, who now has the Rank and House of a Queen. The King's other Wives (which in general are called *Tchaon Fang*, because that the word *Tchaon*, which signifies Lord, signifies likewise Lady and Mistress) do render Obedience to her, and respect her as their Sovereign. They are subject to her Justice, as well as the Women and Eunuchs which serve them; because that not being able to stir out, to go plead elsewhere, it necessarily follows that the Queen should judge them, and cause them to be chastised, to keep them in peace. This is thus practised in all the Courts of Asia; but it is not true neither at Siam, nor perhaps in any part of the East, that the Queen has any Province to govern. 'Tis easie also to comprehend, that if the King loves any of his Ladies more than the rest, he causes her to remove from the Jealousie and harsh Usage of the Queen.

At Siam they continually take Ladies for the service of the Yang, or to be Concubines to the King, if this Prince makes use thereof. But the Siameses deliver up their Daughters only by force, because it is never to see them again; and they redeem them so long as they can for Money. So that this becomes a kind of Extortion; for they designedly take a great many Virgins merely to restore them to their Parents, who redeem them.

The King of Siam has few Mistresses, that is to say eight or ten in all, not out of Continency, but Parsimony. I have already declared, that to have a great many Wives, is in this Country rather Magnificence, than Debauchery. Wherefore they are very much surprized to hear that so great a King as ours has no more than one Wife, that he had no Elephants, and that his Lands bear no Rice; as we might be, when it was told us that the King of Siam has no Horfes, nor standing Forces, and that his Country bears no Corn nor Grapes, altho' all the Relations do so highly extol the Riches and Power of the Kingdom of Siam.

The Queen hath her Elephants and her Balons, and some Officers to take care of her, and accompany her when she goes abroad; but none but her Women and Eunuchs do see her. She is conceal'd from all the rest of the People; and when she goes out either on an Elephant, or in a Balon, it is in a Chair made up with Curtains, which permit her to see what she pleases, and do prevent her being seen: And Respect commands, that if they cannot avoid her, they should turn their back to her, by prostrating themselves when she passes along.

Besides this she has her Magazine, her Ships, and her Treasures. She exercises Commerce; and when we arrived in this Country, the Princess, whom I have reported to be treated like a Queen, was exceedingly embroiled with the King her Father, because that he reserved to himself alone almost all the Foreign Trade, and that thereby she found herself deprived thereof, contrary to the ancient Custom of the Kingdom.

Daughters succeed not to the Crown, they are hardly look'd upon as free. 'Tis the eldest Son of the Queen that ought always to succeed by the Law. Nevertheless because that the Siameses can hardly conceive that amongst Princes of near the same Rank, the most aged should prostrate himself before the younger; it frequently happens that amongst Brethren, tho' they be not all Sons of the Queen, and that amongst Uncles and Nephews, the most advanced in Age is preferred, or rather it is Force which always decides it: The Kings themselves contribute to render the Royal Succession uncertain, because that instead of chusing for their Successor the eldest Son of the Queen, they most frequently follow the Inclination which they have for the Son of some one of their Concubines with whom they were enamour'd.

Of the late Queen his Wife and his Sister.

Of the Princess his only Daughter.

The King of Siam takes the Daughters of his Subjects for his Palace, when he pleases.

He has few Mistresses.

The Queen's House.

Her Magazine and her Ships.

Of the Succession to the Crown; and the Causes which render it uncertain.

The occasion
which tendred
the *Hollanders*
Masters of
Bantam.

'Tis upon this account that the King of *Bantam*, for example, has lost his Crown and his Liberty. He endeavoured to get one of his Sons, whom he had by one of his Concubines, to be acknowledged for his Successor before his Death; and the eldest Son which he had by the Queen put himself into the hands of the *Hollanders*. They set him upon the Throne after having vanquished his Father, whom they still keep in Prison, if he is not dead: but for the reward of this Service they remain Masters of the Port, and of the whole Commerce of *Bantam*.

Of the Succession
to the
Kingdom of
China.

The Succession is not better regulated at *China*, though there be an express and very ancient Law in favour of the eldest Son of the Queen. But what Rule can there be in a thing, how important soever it be, when the Passions of the Kings do always seek to imbroil it? All the Orientals, in the choice of a Governor, adhere most to the Royal Family, and not to a certain Prince of the Royal Family: uncertain in the sole thing wherein all the *Europeans* are not. In all the rest we vary every day, and they never do. Always the same Manners amongst them, always the same Laws, the same Religion, the same Worship; as may be judged by comparing what the Ancients have writ concerning the *Indians*, with what we do now see.

Of the King of
Siam's Ward-
robe.

I have said that 'tis the Women of the Palace which dresses the King of *Siam*; but they have no charge of his Wardrobe; he has Officers on purpose. The most considerable of all is he that touches his Bonnet, altho he be not permitted to put it upon the Head of the King his Master. 'Tis a Prince of the Royal blood of *Camboja*; by reason that the King of *Siam* boasts in being thence descended, not being able to vaunt in being of the race of the Kings his Predecessors. The Title of this Master of the Wardrobe is *Oc-ya Out loya tame*, which sufficiently evinces that the Title of *Pa-ya* does not signifie Prince, seeing that this Prince wears it not. Under him *Oc-Pra Raja Vounsa* has the charge of the cloaths. *Raja* or *Raja* or *Ragi* or *Ratcha*, are only an *Indian* term variously pronounced, which signifies King, or Royal, and which enters into the composition of several Names amongst the *Indians*.

C H A P. XIV.

Of the Customs of the Court of Siam, and of the Policy of its Kings.

The Hours of
Council.

THE common usage of the Court of *Siam* is to hold a Council twice a day; about Ten a clock in the Morning, and about Ten in the Evening, reckoning the hours after our fashion.

The division
of the day and
night according
to the *Siam-
ese*.

As for them, they divide the day into Twelve hours, from the Morning to the Night: The Hours they call *Mong*; they reckon them like us, and give them not a particular name to each, as the *Chineſes* do. As for the Night, they divide it into four Watches, which they call *Tiam*, and it is always broad Day at the end of the Fourth. The *Latins*, *Greeks*, *Jews*, and other people have divided the Day and Night, after the same manner.

Their Clock.

The People of *Siam* have no Clock; but as the Days are almost equal there all the Year, it is easie for them to know what Hour it is, by the sight of the Sun. In the King's Palace they use a kind of Water-Clock: 'Tis a thin Copper Cup, at the bottom of which they do make an almost imperceptible hole. They put it quite empty upon the water: which by little and little enters therein through the hole; and when the Cup is full enough to sink down, this is one of the hours, or a twelfth part of the day. They measure the Watches of the Night by such a like method, and they make a Noise on Copper Basons when the Watch is ended.

I have

I have related how Causes are determined in the King of *Siam's* Council: Affairs of State are there examined; and decided almost after the same manner. That Councillor to whom this Prince has committed a business, makes the report thereof, which consists in reading it, and then proceeds to the consultative Opinions; and hitherto the King's Preference is not necessary. When he comes he hears the report, which is read to him concerning the former Consult, he refuses all the advices, confutes those which he approves not, and then decides. But if the Affair seems to him to merit a more mature deliberation, he makes no decision: but after having proposed his difficulties, he commits the examination thereof to some of his Council, whom he purposely appoints; and principally to those who were of a different Opinion from his. They, after having again consulted together, do cause the report of their new Consultation to be made by one of them, in a full Council, and before the King; and hereupon this Prince consummates his Determination. Yet sometimes, but very rarely, and in affairs of a certain Nature, he will consult the principal *Sancra*, which are the Superiors of the *Talapouts*; whose credit in other matters he depresses as much as he can, though in appearance he honors them exceedingly. In a word, there is such a sort of affairs, wherein he will call the Officers of the Provinces: but on all occasions, and in all affairs, he decides when he pleases; and he is never constrained to either ask advice of any person, or to follow any other advice than his own.

How the King of *Siam* examines Affairs in his Council, and how he terminates them.

He oftentimes punishes ill Advice, or recompences good. I say good or bad according to his sense, for he alone is the Judge thereof. Thus his Ministers do much more apply themselves to divine his sentiments, than to declare him theirs, and they misunderstand him, by reason he also endeavours to conceal his Opinion from them.

He punishes bad Counsels, and recompences good.

In a word, the affair on which he consults them, is not always a real concern; 'tis sometimes a question, which he propounds to them by way of exercise.

Sometimes he consults about Affairs Invented by way of Exercise.

He likewise has a custom of examining his Officers about the *Pra-Tam-Ra*, which is that Book, which I have said contains all their Duties; and causes such to be chastized with the Bastinado, who answer not very exactly; even as a Father chastizes his Children in instructing them.

He examines his Officers about their Obligations.

'Tis an ancient Law of the State established for the security of the King, whose Authority is naturally almost unarmed, that the Courtiers should not render him any visit without his express leave, and only at Weddings and Funerals, and that when they meet, they should speak with a loud voice, and in the presence of a third person: but if the Kings of *Siam* be unactive, or negligent, not any Law secures them. At present the Courtiers may appear again at the Academy of Sports, where the great number seems to take away all opportunity of Caballings.

A Law against the Ambition of the Great Men.

The Trade of an Informer, so detested in all places where men are born free, is commanded to every person at *Siam*, under pain of death for the least things; and so whatever is known by two Witnesses, is almost infallibly related to the King: because that every one hastens to give information thereof, for fear of being herein prevented by his Companion, and remain guilty of Silence.

The Trade of an Informer commanded at *Siam* by the Law.

The present King of *Siam* relies not in an important affair upon the singleness of him to whom he has committed it; but neither does he rely also on the report of a single Informer. He has a number of secret Spies, whom he separately interrogates; and he sometimes sends more than one to interrogate those who have acted in the affair, whereof he would be informed.

The King of *Siam's* Precautions to prevent being deceived.

And yet it is easy for him to be deceived; for throughout the Country every Informer is a dishonest man, and every dishonest man is an Infidel. More frequently in *India*, that it has persuaded the Indian Kings, that if it is their interest to be informed, it is their dignity to hear nothing that may displease them. As for example, they will not tell the King of *Siam*, that he wants Slaves or Vassals, for any enterprize he would go about. They will not tell him that they cannot perform his Commands: but they execute them ill, and when the mischief appears, they will excuse it by some defect. They will tell

Why they are frequently ineffectual.

him

him ill news quite otherwise than it is; to the end that the truth reaching his Ears only by degrees, may vex him less, and that it might be easier to pacify him at several times. They will not counsel him a bad thing; but will so insinuate it, that he may think himself the Author, and only take to himself the bad success. And then they will not tell him that he must alter a thing that he has done amiss; but they will persuade him to do it better some other way, which will only be a pretence: and in the new project they will suppress, without acquainting him, what they designed to reform, and will put in the place what they designed to establish. I my self have seen part of what I relate, and they have assured me the rest.

The King of
Siam rigorous
Justice.

Now such like Artifices are always very perilous; they offend the present King in nothing without being punish'd. Being severe to extream rigour, he puts to death whom he pleases without any formality of Justice, and by the hand of whom he pleases, and in his own Presence. And sometimes the Accuser with the Criminal, the Innocent with the Calumniator: for when the proofs remain doubtful, he, as I have said, exposes both parties to the Tygers.

How he in-
sults over the
dead body.

After the Execution he insults over the dead body with some words, which are a lesson to the living; as for example, after having made him who had robb'd his Magazine, to swallow some melted Silver, he says to the dead body, Miserable wretch, thou hast robb'd me of Ten Pieces of Silver, and Three Ounces only are sufficient to take away thy life. Then he complains that they withheld him not in his Anger; either that he indeed repents sometimes of his precipitate Cruelties, or that he would make believe that he is cruel only in the first Transport.

The Various
Punishments
of the Court
of *Siam*.

Sometimes he exposes a Criminal to an enraged Bull, and the Criminal is armed with a hollow stick, consequently proper to cause fear, but not to wound, with which he defends himself some time. At other times he will give the Criminal to Elephants, sometimes to be trampled under foot and slain, sometimes to be tossed without killing: for they affirm that the Elephants are docile to that degree, and that if a Man is only to be tossed, they throw him one to the other, and receive him on their Trunk, and on their Teeth, without letting him fall on the ground. I have not seen it, but I cannot doubt of the manner which they have assured me.

The Punish-
ments have
respect to the
Crimes.

But the Ordinary Chastisements are those, which have some relation to the Nature of the Crimes. As for example, Extortion exercised on the People, and a Robbery committed on the Prince's Money, will be punished by the swallowing of Gold or Silver melted: Lying, or a Secret revealed, will be punished by Sowing up the Mouth. They will slit it to punish Silence, where it is not to be kept. Any Fault in the execution of Orders, will be Chastised by pricking the Head, as to punish the Memory. To prick the Head, is to cut it with the edge of a Sabre: but to manage it securely, and not to make too great wounds, they hold it with one hand by the Back, and not by the Handle.

The punish-
ment of the
Sword and the
Cudgel.

The punishment of the Glave or Sword is not executed only by cutting the Head off, but by cutting a man through the middle of the Body: And the Cudgel is sometimes also a punishment of death. But when the Chastisement of the Cudgel ought not to extend to death, it ceases not to be very rigorous, and frequently to cause the loss of all knowledge.

The Punish-
ment with
which Prin-
ces are punish-
ed.

If the matter is to put a Prince to death in form, as it may happen, or when a King would rid himself of some of his Relations, or when an Usurper would extinguish the race, from which he has ravish'd the Crown, they make it a piece of Religion not to shed the Royal blood: but they will make him to die with hunger, and sometimes with a lingering hunger, by daily subtracting from him something of his food: or they will stifle him with Rich Stuffs; or rather they will stretch him on Scarlet, which they mightily esteem, because the Wool is rare, and dear; and there they will thrust into his Stomach a billet of Saunders Wood. This Wood is odoriferous, and highly esteem'd. There are three sorts; the white is better than the yellow, and both do grow only in the Isles of *Solor* and *Timor*, to the East of *Java*. The red is esteem'd the least of all, and it grows in several places.

The

The Kings of *Afa* do place their whole security in rendering themselves formidable, and from time out of mind they have had no other Policy: whether that a long Experience has evinced that these People are incapable of Love for their Sovereign; or that these Kings would not be advised that the more they are fear'd, the more they have to fear. However it be, the extreme distrust in which the Kings of *Siam* do always live, appears sufficiently in the cares which they take to prevent all secret Correspondence amongst the great Men, to keep the Gates of their Palace shut, and to permit no armed person to enter, and to disarm their own Guards. A Gun fired, by accident or otherwise, so near the Palace that the King hears it, is a capital Crime; and the noise of a Pistol being heard in the Palace, a little after the Conspiracy of the *Macassars*, 'twas doubted whether the King had not with this shot killed one of his Brothers; because that the King alone has power to shoot, and that moreover one of his Brethren had been suspected of having meddled in this Conspiracy: and this doubt was not cleared when we left *Siam*.

The extreme distrust of the Kings of *Siam*

Besides these Punishments which I have mentioned, they have some less dolorous, but more infamous, as to expose a Man in a public place loaded with Irons, or with his Neck put into a kind of Ladder or Pillory, which is called *Cangue*, in *Siamse* *Ka*. The two sides of this Ladder are about six foot long, and are fastned to a Wall, or to Posts, each at one end, with a Cord; inasmuch that the Ladder may be rais'd up, and let down, as if it was fastned to Pullies. In the middle of the Ladder are two Steps or Rounds, between which is the Neck of the Offender, and there are no more Rounds than these two. The Offender may sit on the ground, or stand, when the weight of the Ladder, which bears upon his Shoulders, is not too big, as it is sometimes; or when the Ladder is not fastned at the four ends: for in this last Case it is planted in the Air, bearing at the ends upon Props, and then the Criminal is as it were hung by the Neck; he hardly touches the ground with the Tips of his Toes. Besides this, they have the use of Stocks and Manacles.

Infamous Punishments.

The Criminal is sometimes in a Ditch to be lower than the ground; and this Ditch is not always broad, but oftentimes it is extremely narrow, and the Criminal, properly speaking, is buried up to the Shoulders. There, for the greater Ignominy, they give him Cuffs or Blows on the Head; or they only stroke the hand over his Head, Affronts esteemed very great, especially if received from the hand of a Woman.

But what is herein very particular, is, that the most infamous Punishment is reproachful only as long as it lasts. He that suffers it to day, will re-enter to-morrow, if the Prince thinks fit, into the most important Offices.

The shame of the Punishments lasts no longer than the Punishments. It is attended with Honour.

Moreover, they boast of the Punishments which they receive by Order of their King, as of his paternal care for him whom he has the goodliest to chastise. He receives Compliments and Presents after the Bastinado, and it is principally in the East that Chastisements do pass for testimonies of Affection. We saw a young *Mandarin* shut up to be punished, and a *Frenchman* offering him to go and ask his Pardon of his Superior: No, replied the *Mandarin* in *Portuguese*, *I would see how far his Love would reach; or as an European would have said, I would see how far he will extend his Rigor.* To be reduced from an eminent place to a lower is no Reproach, and this befel the second Ambassador whom we saw here. Yet it happens also, that in this Country they hang themselves in despair, when they see themselves reduced from an high Employment to an extreme Poverty; and to the six Months Service due to the Prince, tho' this Fall be not shameful.

I have said in another place, that a Father shares sometimes in the punishment of the Son, as being bound to answer for the Education which he has given him. At *China* an Officer answers for the Faults of all the persons of his Family, because they pretend, that he who knows not how to govern his own Family, is not capable of any public Function. The Fear therefore, which particular persons have of seeing their Families turned out of the Employments, which do make the Splendor and Support thereof, renders them all wise, as if they were all Magistrates. In like manner at *Siam*, and at *China*, an Officer is punished for

Others are included in the Punishments with the Criminals.

the Offences of another Officer that is subject to his Orders, by reason that he is to watch over him that depends on him; and that having power to correct him, he ought to answer for his conduct. Thus about three years since we saw at *Siam* for three days, *Oc-Pra-Simo-ho-fut*, by Nation a *Brame*, who is now in the King of *Siam*'s Council of State, exposed to the *Cangue* with the head of a Malefactor, which they had put to Death, hung about his Neck; without being accused of having had any other hand in the crime of him, whose head was hung to his Neck, than too great Negligence in watching over a Man that was subject to him. After this 'tis no wonder in my opinion, that the Bastinado should be so frequent at *Siam*. Sometimes there may be seen several Officers at the *Cangue*, disposed in a Circle; and in the midst of them will be the head of a man, which they have put to death; and this head will hang by several strings from the Neck of every one of these Officers.

The least pretence for a Crime is punished.

The worst is, that the least appearance of guilt renders an action criminal: To be accused is almost sufficient to be culpable. An action in it self innocent becomes bad, so soon as any one thinks to make a Crime thereof. And from thence proceed the so frequent disgraces of the principal Officers. They know not how, for instance, to reckon up all the *Barcelons* that the King of *Siam* has had since he reigned.

The Policy of the Kings of *Siam*, cruel against all, and against their own Brethren.

The Greatness of the Kings, whose Authority is despotical, is to exercise Power over all, and over their own Brethren. The Kings of *Siam* do maim them, in several ways, when they can: they take away or debilitate their sight by fire; they render them impotent by dislocation of Members, or fortify by Drinks, securing themselves and their Children against the Enterprizes of their Brethren, only by rendering them incapable of reigning: he that now reigns has not treated his better. This Prince will not therefore envy our King, the sweetness of being beloved by his Subjects, and the Glory of being dreaded by his Enemies. The Idea of a great King is not at *Siam*, that he should render himself terrible to his Neighbours, provided he be so to his Subjects.

The Government of *Siam* more burdensome to the Nobles than to the Populace.

Yet there is this Reflection to be made on this sort of Government, that the Yoke thereof is less heavy, if I may so say, on the Populace than on the Nobles. Ambition in this Country leads to Slavery: Liberty, and the other Enjoyments of Life are for the vulgar Conditions. The more one is unknown to the Prince, and the further from him, the greater Ease he enjoys; and for this reason the Employments of the Provinces are there considered, as a Recompence of the Services done in the Palace.

How tempestuous the Ministry is at *Siam*.

The Ministry there is tempestuous: not only thro the natural Inconstancy, which may appear in the Prince's Mind; but because that the ways are open for all persons to carry complaints to the Prince against his Ministers. And though the Ministers and all the other Officers, do employ all their artifices to render these ways of complaint ineffectual, whereby one may attack them all, yet all complaints are dangerous, and sometimes it is the slightest which hurts, and which subverts the best established favour. These examples, which very frequently happen, do edify the People; and if the present King had not too far extended his exactions without any real necessity, his Government would as much please the Populace, as it is terrible to the Nobles.

The King of *Siam*'s regards for his people.

Nevertheless he has had that regard for his People, as not to augment his Duties on cultivated Lands, and to lay no imposition on Corn and Fish; to the end that what is necessary to Life might not be dear: A moderation so much the more admirable, as it seems that they ought not to expect any from a Prince educated in this Maxim, that his Glory consists in not setting limits to his power, and always in augmenting his Treasure.

The Inconveniences of this Government. It renders the Prince wavering on his Throne.

But these Kings which are so absolutely the Masters of the Fortune and Life of their Subjects, are so much the more wavering in the Throne. They find not in any person, or at most in a small number of Domesticks, that Fidelity or Love which we have for our Kings. The People which possess nothing in property, and which do reckon only upon what they have buried in the ground, as they have no solid establishment in their Country, so they have no obligation thereto. Being resolved to bear the same Yoke under any Prince whatever, and having

having the assurance of not being able to bear a heavier, they concern not themselves in the Fortune of their Prince: and experience evinces that upon the least trouble they let the Crown go, to whom Force or Policy will give it. A *Siamese*, a *Chinese*, an *Indian*, will easily die to exert a particular Hatred, or to avoid a miserable Life, or a too cruel Death: but to die for their Prince and their Country, is not a Virtue in their practice. Amongst them are not found the powerful motives by which our People animate themselves to a vigorous Defence. They have no Inheritance to lose, and Liberty is oftentimes more burdenson to them than Servitude. The *Siamese* which the King of *Pegu* has taken in war, will live peaceable in *Pegu*, at Twenty miles distant from the Frontiers of *Siam*, and they will there cultivate the Lands which the King of *Pegu* has given them, no remembrance of their Country making them to hate their new Servitude. And it is the fame of the *Peguins*, which are in the Kingdom of *Siam*.

The Eastern Kings are looked upon as the adoptive Sons of Heaven. ^{Tis} ^{How uncertain the extreme Respect of the Orientals is for their Kings.} They are believed that they have Souls celestial, and as high above other Souls by their Merit; as the Royal Condition appears more happy than that of other men. Nevertheless, if any one of their Subjects revolts, the People doubt presently which of the two Souls is most valuable, whether that of the Lawful Prince, or that of the Rebellious Subject; and whether the Adoption of Heaven has not passed from the King to the Subject. Their Histories are all full of these examples: and that of *China*, which Father *Martinus* has given us, is curious in the ratiocinations, by which the *Chinese*, I mean the *Chinese* Philosophers, are often persuaded that they followed the Inclination of Heaven in changing their Sovereign, and sometimes in preferring a High-way-man before their Lawful Prince.

But besides that the despotick Authority is almost destitute of defence, it is moreover rather usurped by him that possesses it, in that the exercise thereof is less communicated. Whoever takes upon him the Spirit or Person of a Prince, has almost nothing more to do to dispossess the Prince; because that the exercise of the Authority being too much reunited in the Prince, there is none besides him that prohibits it in case of need. Thus is it not lawful for a King to be a Minor, or too easie to let himself be governed. The Scepter of this Country soon falls from hands that need a support to sustain it. On the contrary, in Kingdoms where several permanent bodies of Magistracy divide the Splendor and the Exercise of the Royal Authority, these same bodies do preserve it entire for the King, who imparts it to them; because they deliver not to the Usurper that part which is in their hands, and which alone suffices to save that which the King himself knows not how to keep.

In the ancient Rebellions of *China* it appears, that he who seized on the Royal Seal, presently rendered himself Master of all; because that the people obeyed the Orders where the Seal appear'd, without informing themselves in whose hands the Seal was. And the Jealousie which the King of *Siam* has of his, that I have said he intrusts with no person, persuades me that it is the same in his Country. The danger therefore to these Princes is in that wherein they place their security. Their Policy requires that their whole Authority should be in their Seal, to exercise it more entire themselves alone: And this Policy as much exposes their Authority, as their Seal is easie to lose.

The same danger is found in a great Treasure, the only spring of all the Despotick Governments, where the ruin'd people cannot supply extraordinary Subsidies in publick necessities. In a great Treasure all the Forces of the State reunite themselves, and he that seizes on the Treasure, seizes on the State. So that besides a Treasures ruining the People, on whom it is levied, it frequently serves against those that accumulate it; and this likewise draws the dissipation thereof.

The *Indian* Government has therefore all the defects of the Despotick Government. It renders the Prince and his Subjects equally uncertain: It betrays from the Royal Authority, and delivers it up entire, under pretence of putting the more entire Management thereof into the hands of a single person; and moreover it deprives it of its natural defence, by separating the whole Interest of the Subjects

How uncertain the extreme Respect of the Orientals is for their Kings.

These Princes do oftentimes lose their Authority by being too jealous.

The peril in re-uniting all the Royal Authority in the Seal.

A publick Treasure necessary to despotick Governments, and what are the Inconveniences thereof.

The Conclusion of this Chapter.

Subjects from that of the Prince and State. Having therefore related how the Kings of *Siam* do treat their Subjects, it remains to show how they treat, as well with foreign Princes by Embassies, as with the foreign Nations which are fled to *Siam*.

CHAP. XV.

Concerning the Form of Embassies at *Siam*.

The Eastern Ambassadors represent not their Masters, and are less honored than in Europe.

AN Ambassador throughout the East is no other than a Kings Messenger: he represents not his Master. They honour him little, in comparison of the respects which are render'd to the Letters of Credence whereof he is Bearer. Mr. de Chaumont, tho an Ambassador extraordinary, never had a *Balon* of the Body, not on the very day of his entrance; and it was in a *Balon* of the Body that the Kings Letter was put, which he had to deliver to the King of *Siam*. This *Balon* had four *Umbrella's*, one at each corner of the Seat; and it was attended with four other *Balons* of the Body, adorn'd with their *Umbrella's*; but empty; as the King of Spain, when he goes abroad in his Coach, and that he would be seen and known, has always one which follows him empty, which is called *de respecto*, a word and custom come from *Italy*. The Kings Presents were likewise carry'd in *Balons* of the Body, and the same things were observed at the entrance of the King's Envoys. Thus the Orientals make no difference between an Ambassador and an Envoy: And they understand not Ambassadors, nor ordinary Envoys, nor Residents; because they send no person to reside at a foreign Court, but there to dispatch a business, and return.

The *Siamese* Embassies consists in three persons.

They are looked upon as Messengers which carry a Letter.

The *Siamese* do never send more nor less than three Ambassadors together. The first is called *Raja Tout*, that is to say, Royal Messenger, the second *Onkha Tout*, and the third *Tri Tout* (terms which I understand not) but the two last Ambassadors are obliged in every thing to follow the Advice of the first.

Every one therefore who is the carrier of a Letter from the King, is reputed an Ambassador throughout the East. Wherefore, after the Ambassador of *Persia*, which Mr. de Chaumont left in the Country of *Siam*, was dead at *Tenasserim*, his Domesticks having elected one amongst them, to deliver the King of *Persia's* Letter to the King of *Siam*, he that was elected was received without any other Character, as the real Ambassador would have been, and with the same honors which the King of *Persia* had formerly granted to the Ambassador of *Siam*.

He returns them no Answer, but a Receipt.

But that wherein they treat an Ambassador like a meer Messenger, is, that the King of *Siam*, in the Audience of Leave, gives him a *Receipt* of the Letter he has received from him; and if this Prince returns an Answer, he gives it not to him, but he sends his own Ambassadors with him to carry it.

How the King of *Siam* is advertised of the Arrival of an Ambassador.

A foreign Ambassador which arrives at *Siam*, is stopped at the Entrance of the Kingdom, until the King of *Siam* has received intelligence thereof; and if he is accompanied with *Siamese* Ambassadors, as we were: it belongs to the *Siamese* Ambassadors to go before, to carry unto the King their Master, the news of their Arrival, and of the Arrival of the foreign Ambassador, whom they brought with them.

An Ambassador has his Charges born at *Siam*. He must Communicate his Instructions.

Every foreign Ambassador is lodged and maintained by the King of *Siam*, and during the time of his Embassy he may exercise Merchandize; but he cannot treat of any affair till he has delivered his Letter of Credence, and communicated his Original Instructions. They dispensed with this last Article to Mr. de Chaumont, and the King's Envoys; but the Ambassadors of *Siam* dispensed not therewith in *France*: They communicated their Instructions.

The Ambassador cannot enter into the Metropolis, till he goes directly to Audience, nor continue therein till after the Audience of Leave: in going from the Audience of Leave he departs out of the City, and negotiates nothing more. Wherefore on the Evening before the Audience of Leave, the King of Siam demands of him, *Whether he has any thing to propose?* And in the Audience of Leave, he asks him, *If he is contented?*

He enters not into his Metropolis till he goes to Audience and departs thence in going from the Audience of Leave. The Solemn Audiences.

The Majesty of the Prince resides principally in the Metropolis, 'tis there that the Solemn Audiences are given; out of this City every Audience is accounted private, and without Ceremony. The whole Guard, as well the Ordinary, as that of Ostentation, was put in Arms for the Audience at Siam: the Elephants and the Horses appear'd with their best Harnesse, and in great number, on the Entry of the King's Envoys, and there was almost nothing of all this for the Audiences at Louvo. At Siam the Umbrella, which was before the King's window, had nine Rounds, and the two which were at the side had seven each. At Louvo the King had no Umbrella before him, but two on each side, which had each four Rounds apiece, and which mounted up much lower than those of Siam. The King was not at Louvo at a single window, as at Siam; he was in a wooden Tower joined to the Floor of the Hall, into which he enter'd behind, and immediately, by a Step higher than the Hall. So that tho' this Prince was as high at Louvo as at Siam, yet he was at Louvo in the Hall of Audience; whereas at Siam he was in another Room, which had a Prospect into the Hall. Moreover, the Gate of the Hall at Louvo was large, and in the middle of the Tower, that is to say opposite to the King; whereas at Siam the door was low and strait, and almost at the corner of the Hall: differences, which have all their reasons in this Country, where the least things are measured and performed with diligence. At the Audience at Siam there were 50. Mandarins prostrate in the Hall, 25 on each side, in five Ranks, each consisting of five. At the Audiences at Louvo there were no more than 32, 16 on each side, in four Ranks, of four in a Rank. The Audience of Reception, where the Letter of Credence is delivered, is always given in the chief City, and with all the magnificence imaginable, in respect to the Letter of Credence: the other Audiences are given without the City, and with less Pomp, because there appears no Letter from the King.

The Custom in all Audiences is, that the King speaks first, and not the Ambassador. What he speaks in Audiences of Ceremony, is reduced to some Questions almost always the same; after which, he orders the Ambassador to address himself to the *Barcalon* upon all the Propositions which he has to make. Harrangues please him not at all; tho' he had the goodness to acquaint me, upon the Compliments I had the Honour to make to him, that I was a great Contriver of Words. We were fain to embellish them with Figures, and therein to use the Sun, Moon and Stars, Ornaments of Discourse, which may please them in other things: This Prince thinks that the longer an Ambassador speaks the first time, the less he honours him. And indeed when the Ambassador is only a Messenger, which delivers a Letter, it is natural that he has nothing to say which is not asked him. After the King has spoken to the Ambassador, he gives him *Aruk* and *Betel*, and a Vest, with which the Ambassador cloaths himself immediately, and sometimes a Sabre, and a Chain of Gold.

What is observed in Audiences.

This Prince gave Sabres, Chains of Gold and Vests, or sometimes only Vests to Foreigners which are not Ambassadors, he gives Audience only by accident. The Indians are cunning and deceitful in their Negotiations.

In all sorts of Business, the Indians are slow in concluding, by reason of the length of their Councils, for they never depart from their Customs. They are very phlegmatic and hypocritical. They are insinuating in their Speeches: captious in their Writings, deceitful, to such a degree as to Cheat. The praise which the King of Siam's Wives and Concubines give him, when they would in their Ne-flatter him to the highest degree, was to tell him, not that he was an Hero, or the greatest General in the World, but that he had always been more politic and witty, than all the Princes with whom he had to do. They engage themselves in writing as little as they can. They will rather receive you into a Port,

or into a Castle, than they will agree with you to surrender them up to you by a Treaty in ample Form, and sealed by their *Barcalon*.

That the Europeans have ever found it necessary to treat the Indians with arrogance.

The *Portugueses* being naturally bold and distrustful, have always treated the *Indians* with a great deal of Loftiness, and with very little Confidence: And the *Dutch* have thought they could not do better, than herein to imitate the *Portugueses*; because that indeed the *Indians* being educated in a Spirit of Servitude, are crafty, and, as I have said in another place, subservient to those who treat them haughtily, and insolent to those that use them gently. The King of *Siam* says of his Subjects, that they are of the temper of Apes, who tremble so long as one holds the end of their Band, and who disown their Master, when the Band is loosed. Examples are not rare in *India* of simple European Factors, who have bastinado'd the Officers of the *Indian* Kings without being punished. And it is evident, that the certain vigorous Repartees which are sometimes made in our Countries, appear to us more daring, than the Bastinado is in theirs; provided it be given them in cold Blood, and not in Anger: A Man that suffers himself to be transported with Passion, is what the *Indians* most condemn.

Presents are essential to Embassies in the East.

But as Trade is their most sensible Interest, Presents are essential for them in Embassies. 'Tis a trafficking under an honourable Title, and from King to King. Their Politeness excites them to testify by several Demonstrations, how they esteem the Presents which they have received. If it is any thing of use, tho' it be not for their use, they publicly prepare whatever shall be necessary to use it, as if they had a real desire thereof. If it is any thing to wear, they will adorn themselves therewith in your presence. If they are Horses, they will build a Stable on purpose to lodge them. Was it only a Telescope, they would build a Tower to see with this Glass. And so they will seem to make an high account of all sorts of Presents, to honour the Prince which sends them, unless he has received Presents from their part with less demonstrations of Esteem. Nevertheless they are really concern'd only for the Profit. Before that the King's Presents went out of our hands, some of the King of *Siam's* Officers came to take an exact description thereof in writing, even to the counting all the Stones of every sort which were interspers'd in the Embroideries; and to the end that it might not seem that the King their Master took this care to prevent being robbed by his Officers, through whose hands the Presents were to pass, they pretended that this Prince was curious and impatient, and that it was necessary to go render him an account of what this was, and to be ready to answer him exactly upon the least things.

The Orientals do esteem it a great Honour to receive Embassies.

All the Oriental Princes do esteem it a great Honour to receive Embassies, and to send the fewest they can: Because that, in their Opinion, it is a Badge which cannot be alien'd from them and their Riches, and that they can content themselves without the Riches of Foreigners. They look upon Embassies, as a kind of Homage; and in their Courts they retain the Foreign Ministers as long as it is possible, to prolong, as much as in them lies, the Honour which they receive. Thus the great *Mogul*, and the Kings of *China* and *Japan*, do never send Ambassadors. The King of *Persia* likewise sends only to *Siam*, because that the King of *Siam's* Ambassador had demanded it, as I proceed to relate.

The Siamese Ambassadors are accountable.

The *Siamese* Ambassadors are accountable, because that they are loaded with Goods; and it rarely happens, that they render an Account good enough entirely to avoid the Bastinado. Thus *Agri Selim* ('tis the name of a *Moor*, whom the King of *Siam* sent eight or nine years since into *Persia*, as his Ambassador) was severely chastised at his return, tho' in appearance he had served very faithfully. He had established Commerce with *Persia*, and had brought with him that *Persian* Ambassador, who, as I have several times related, dyed at *Tenasserim*. He was a *Moula*, or Doctor of the Law of *Mahomet*, whom *Agri Selim* had demanded of the King of *Persia*, to instruct, as he pretended, the King of *Siam* in *Mahometanism*. *Bernier* Tome II. pag. 54. reports that during his abode in the *Indies*, some Ambassadors from *Prester John*, who, as every one knows, professes to be a Christian, demanded of the great *Mogul* an *Alcoran*, and eight of the most renowned Books that were in the *Mahometan* Religion; a base Flattery, which exceedingly scandalized *Bernier*. But generally speaking, these trading Kings do exceedingly make use of the pretence of Religion, for the increase of their Commerce.

Expli-

Explication of the Platform of the Hall of Audience of Siam.

- A Three Steps which are placed under the Window, where the King of Siam was, to raise me high enough to deliver him the King's Letter from hand to hand.
- B Three Parasols or Umbrella's.
- C Two pair of Stairs to go up into the place where the King of Siam was.
- D Two Tables covered with Tapestry, on which were laid the King's Present, which could be held there.
- E The Son of Mr. Ceberet standing, holding the King's Letter in a Gold Basin of Figure with a triple Story, the Figure of which is seen at Page.
- F Two little square and low Stools, each covered with a little Carpet, for the King's Emissaries to sit on. Monsieur de Chaumont had such another.
- G The Bishop of Metellopolis, Apostolick Vicar, sitting cross-legg'd.
- H Monsieur Constance prostrate at my right hand, and behind me to serve as my Interpreter.
- I Father Tachart sitting cross-legg'd.
- K Fifty Mandarins prostrate.
- L The French Gentlemen sitting with their Legs across.
- M A little pair of Brick Stairs to go up to the Hall of Audience.
- N The Wall whereunto this pair of Stairs is fixed.

The Explication of the Platform of the Temple, which should have been inserted in Chap. 2. Part 2.

- A The Steps before the Gates of the Temple.
- B The principal Gate.
- C The two Gates behind.
- D The Piles of Wood which bear the Roof.
- E The Piles of Wood which bear before and behind the Temple.
- FF The Altar.
- G The Figure of Sommona-Codam taking up the all the forepart of the Altar.
- HH The Statues of Pra Mogla, and of Pra Sarabout, less and lower than the first.
- III Other Statues lesser than the former.
- K Steps to ascend on the Altar, which is a Mass built with Bricks about 4 Foot high.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the Foreigners of different Nations fled to, and settled at Siam.

The Policy observed in respect of the Strangers fled to Siam.

Was, as I have said, the Liberty of Commerce, which had formerly invited to Siam a great multitude of Strangers of different Nations; who settled there with the Liberty of living according to their Customs, and of publicly exercising their several ways of Worship. Every Nation possesses a different Quarter. The Quarters which are without the City, and which do compose the Suburbs thereof, the *Portugueses* do call *Camp*, and the *Siameses* *Ban*. Moreover every Nation chooses its Chief, or its *Nai*, as the *Siameses* do speak, and this Chief manages the Affairs of his Nation with the *Mandarin*, whom the King of Siam nominates for this purpose, and whom they call the *Mandarin* of this Nation. But Affairs of the least importance are not determined by this *Mandarin*, they are carried to the *Barcalon*.

The Fortune of the Moors very different at Siam, at several times.

Amongst the several Nations, that of the *Moors* has been the best established under this Reign. It once hapned that the *Barcalon* was a *Moor*, probably because the King of Siam thought by this means better to establish his Commerce, amongst the most powerful of his Neighbouring Princes, who do all make profession of Mahumeranism: The principal Offices of the Court, and of the Provinces were then in the hands of the *Moors*: The King of Siam caused several Mosques to be erected for them at his expence, and he still bears the charges of their principal Festival, which they celebrate for several days together, in memory of the Death of *Haby*, or of his Children. The *Siameses*, which embraced the Religion of the *Moors*, had the Privilege of being exempted from the personal Service: But the *Banculon Moor* soon experienced the Inconstancy of the Fortunes of Siam, he fell into Disgrace, and the Credit of those of his Nation fell afterwards into Decay. The considerable Offices and Employments were taken away from them, and the *Siameses* which were turned Mahumetans, were forced to pay in ready Money for the six Months Service, from which they had been exempted. Nevertheless their Mosques are remaining to them, as well as the publick Protection which the King of Siam gives to their Religion, as to all foreign Religions. There are therefore three or four Thousand *Moors* at Siam, as many *Portugueses* born in India, and as many *Chinefesi*, and perhaps as many *Malays*, besides what there is of other Nations.

The Foreign Commerce ceased at Siam has caused the Richest Strangers, and especially the *Moors* to depart thence.

Why the Foreign Trade ceased at Siam.

But the richest Foreigners, and especially the *Moors*, are retired elsewhere, since the King of Siam has reserved to himself alone almost all the foreign Commerce. The King his Father had heretofore done the same thing, and perhaps it is the Policy of Siam to do it thus from time to time; otherwise it is certain that they have almost always left the Trade free, and that it has frequently flourished at Siam. *Ferdinand Mendez Pinto* reports, that in his time there were annually above a thousand foreign Ships; whereas at present there goes no more than two or three *Dutch Barks*.

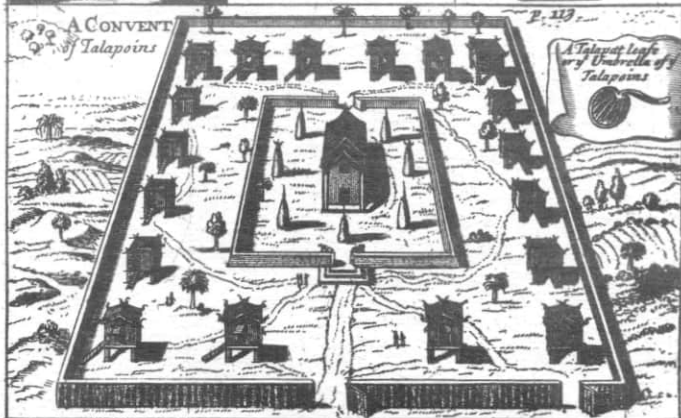
Commerce requires a certain liberty: no person can resolve to go to Siam, necessarily to sell unto the King what is carry'd thither, and to buy of him alone what one would carry thence, when this was not the product of the Kingdom. For though there were several foreign Ships together at Siam, the Trade was not permitted from one Ship to the other, nor with the Inhabitants of the Country, Natives or Foreigners, till that the King, under the pretence of a preference due to his Royal dignity, had purchased what was best in the Ships, and at his own rate, to sell it afterwards as he pleased: because that when the season for the departure of the Ships presses on, the Merchants choose rather to sell to great loss, and dearly to buy a new Cargo, than to wait at Siam a new season to depart, without hopes of making a better Trade.

A Siamese - Song.

pag. 117.



p. 68.



In a word, 'tis neither the natural Riches, nor the Manufactures of the Kingdom of *Siam*, that should tempt one to go thither. The natural *Siameses*, ruin'd as they are by impositions and services, cannot carry on a great Trade, though they should have all the liberty imaginable. The Trade is manag'd only with the superfluous Money, and in the places where the Impositions are very great, there is scarcely found Money necessary for life. The vast sum levied on the people returns slowly to the people, and especially in the remote Provinces; and the whole does not return, because that a great part thereof remains in the hands of those, that tend upon the receipts and expences of the Prince. And as to that part which returns to the people, it remains not in their hands for their uses; it soon goes thence to return to the Princes Coffers: so that it must needs be, that all the small Trades do cease for want of Money; which cannot be, but the general Commerce of a State does greatly suffer. But this is yet much truer at *Siam*, where the Prince annually accumulates his Revenues, instead of expending them. Having thus explained what respects the King, the Officers, and the People of *Siam*, it remains to speak of their *Talapoints*, or Priests.

The Natural *Siameses* cannot afford a great Trade.

C H A P. XVII.

Of the Talapoints, and their Convents.

They live in Convents, which the *Siameses* do call *Vat*; and they make use of the Temples, which the *Siameses* do call *Pihan*, and the Portuguese *Pagode*, the word *Pagan* of the Persian word *Pouzgheda*, which signifies a Temple of Idols; but the Portuguese do use the word *Pagode*, to signify equally the Idol and the Temple.

The origine of the word *Pagan*.

The Temple and the Convent do take up a very great square piece of ground, encompass'd with an Inclosure of Bambou. In the middle of the ground stands the Temple, as in the place esteem'd the most honourable in their Encampments; and at the corners of this ground, and along the Bambou Inclosure, are ranged the Cells of the *Talapoints*, like the Tents of an Army; and sometimes the Rows thereof are double, or triple: These Cells are little single Houses, erected on Piles, and that of the Superior is after the same manner, but a little larger and higher than the rest. The Pyramids stand near and quite round the Temple: and the ground which the Temple and the Pyramid take up, besides its being higher, is inclosed between four Walls: but from these Walls to the Cells there likewise remains a great void piece of Ground, which is as it were the Court of the Convent. Sometimes these Walls are all bare, and serve only as an Inclosure to the ground, which the Temple and the Pyramids take up: Sometimes along these Walls there are covered Galleries of the Figure of those, which in our Religious Houses we call the Cloyster; and on a counterwall breast high, which runs along these Galleries, they place in a Train, and close together, a great number of Idols sometimes gilded.

A Description of the Convents of the *Talapoints*.

Though at *Siam* there are some *Talapointesses*, or Women, who in most things do observe the Rule of the *Talapoints*, yet they have no other Convents than those of the *Talapoints* themselves: The *Siameses* do think that the advanced Age of all these Women, for there are none young, is a sufficient caution of their Chastity. There are not *Talapointesses* in all the Convents: but in those where any are, their Cells run along one of the sides of the Bambou Inclosure, which I have mentioned, without being otherwise separated from those of the *Talapoints*.

They have Cells for the *Talapointesses*.

The *Nens*, or *Talapoin Children*, are dispersed one, two, or three into every *Talapoin* Cell, and they serve the *Talapoin* with whom they lodge, that is to say *Talapoin Children* with whom they have been placed by their Parents: So that when a *Talapoin* has two or three *Nens*, he receives no more. In a word, these *Nens* are not all young; some there are which do grow old in this Condition, which is not thought entirely religious, and the eldest of all they call *Taten*. It belongs to

How the *Talapoin Children* are lodg'd.

him to pluck up the Weeds which grow in the ground of the Convent, which the *Talapoins* themselves cannot do, in their opinion, without sin.

The Halls of the Convent.

The School of the *Nens* is a Hall of Bambou standing alone; and besides this Hall, there is always such another, where the People carry their Alms on the days when the Temple is shut, and where the *Talapoins* assemble for their ordinary Conferences.

The Steeple.

The Steeple is a Wooden Tower standing also alone, they call it *Hracang*, or the Belfry; but the Bell has no Clapper. They strike it with a Mallet or Wooden Hammer to found it: and it is only in War, or for things of War, that they strike their Bafons, and other Instruments of Brass or Copper, with Iron Hammers.

Of the Superiors.

Every Convent is under the Conduct of a Superior called *Tchaun-Fat*, that is to say, Lord or Master of the Convent; but all the Superiors are not of equal dignity: The most honorable are those which they call *Sancrats*, and the *Sancrat* of the Convent of the Palace is the most reverend of all. Yet no Superior, nor no *Sancrat*, has Authority or Jurisdiction over another. This body would be too formidable if it had but one head, and if it acted always unanimously, and according to the same Maxims.

Of the *Sancrats*.

The Missionaries have compared the *Sancrats* to our Bishops, and the simple Superiors to our Curates; and they have some inclination to believe that this Country has formerly had some Christian Bishops, to whom the *Sancrats* have succeeded. None but the *Sancrats* indeed can make *Talapoins*, as none but Bishops can make Priests. But otherwise the *Sancrats* have not any Jurisdiction nor any Authority, neither over the People, nor over the *Talapoins*, which are not of their Convent; and they could not inform me whether they have any particular Character which makes them *Sancrats*, save that they are Superiors of certain Convents designed for *Sancrats*. Every Convent therefore designed for a *Sancrat* is distinguished from the other Convents, wherein there are only simple Superiors, by some Stones planted round the Temple, and near its Walls, each of which is double, and bears some resemblance, but at a very great distance, with a Mitre set upon a Pedestal. I have inserted the Figure thereof in the Print of a Temple. Their Name in *Siamese* is *Sema*. Now 'tis this resemblance of these Stones with the Mitres, that is the principal Foundation of the Suspicion, which the Missionaries have, that the *Sancrats* have succeeded some Bishops. The more of these Stones there is round a Temple, the more the *Sancrat* is thought advanced in Dignity; but there never is fewer than two, nor more than eight. The Ignorance under which the *Siameses* are, as to what these Stones do signify, has put the Missionaries upon seeking the Origine thereof in Christianity.

The honors of the *Sancrats*.

The King of *Siam* gives to the principal *Sancrats* a Name, an Umbrella, a Sedan, and some men to carry it; but the *Sancrats* do make use of this Equipage only to wait upon the King, and they never are *Talapoins* that carry the Sedan. The *Sancrat* of the Palace is now called *Pra Viriat*.

The Spirit of this Institution.

The Spirit of the Institution of the *Talapoins*, is, to keep themselves from the Sins of the People, to lead a penitent Life for the Sins of those that bestow Alms upon them, and to live on Alms. They eat not in common, and tho they be very hospitable to the Seculars, which have recourse to them, and even to Christians, yet it is prohibited them to share the Alms which they receive, or at least to do it presently; because that every one of them being thought to repent sufficiently, has no need to redeem his Sins by bestowing Alms on his Companion, and perhaps they would also oblige them all to the fatigue of begging: Nevertheless a *Talapoin* is not prohibited from ever giving any thing to his Brother, or from assisting him in a real Necessity. They have two Lodgings, one on each side of their door to receive the Passengers, who desire a bed amongst them.

There are two sorts of *Talapoins*.

There are two sorts of *Talapoins* at *Siam*, as in all the rest of the *Indies*. Some do live in the Woods, and others in the Cities. And those of the Woods do lead, as they say, a Life which would appear intolerable, and which would doubtless be so in Countries less hot than *Siam*, or than the *Thebais* of *Egypt*.

All,

All, that is to say those of the Cities, and those of the Woods, are obliged under pain of Fire strictly to keep Celibacy, so long as they continue in their Profession; and the King of Siam, from whose Jurisdiction they cannot withdraw themselves, pardons them not in this point: for as they have great Privileges, and amongst other things are exempted from the six Months Service, it imports him that the Profession of *Talapoin* become not altogether convenient, for fear lest all his Subjects embrace it.

To diminish the number of these privileged Persons, he causes them to be from time to time examined as to their Knowledge, which respects the Language and its Books: and when we arrived in this Country, he had just reduced several Thousands to the Secular condition, because they had not been found learned enough. Their Examiner was *Oc-Louang Souvacac*, a young man of about Twenty eight or Thirty years old, the Son of that *Oc-Pra Pipicharatcha*, who, as I have said, commands the Elephants; but the *Talapoints* of the Woods had refused to submit to the Examination of a Secular, and consented to be examined only by one of their Superiors.

They educate the Youth, as I have related; and they explain their Doctrine to the People, according as it is written in their *Balie* Books. They preach the next day after every new and every full Moon, and the People are ever very constant in the Temples. When the Channel of the River is full of Rain-water, until the Inundation begins to sink, they preach every day, from six in the Morning till Dinner-time, and from one in the Afternoon till five in the Evening. The Preacher is seated cross-leg'd in a high Chair of State, and several *Talapoints* release one another in this Office.

The People approves the Doctrine which is preach'd to them in these *Balie* words, *sa tou sa*, which signifies, it is so Sir, or in other *Siamese* words which amount to the same sense; and then they give Alms to the Preacher: and those that do preach frequently, not only at this time, but during the whole course of the year, do easily become rich.

Now it is this time which the *Europeans* have called the Lent of the *Talapoints*. Their Fasting is to eat nothing from Noon, unless they may chew *Betel*: but when they do not fast, they only eat Fruit in the Afternoon. The *Indians* are naturally so sober, that a Fast of Forty, nay of an Hundred days, appears not incredible to them. *Twiss*, a Dutch Author, in his Description of the *Indies* reports, that Experience has certainly convinced that there are some *Indians* that can fast Twenty, Thirty, and Forty days, without taking any thing but a little Liquor mixed with some bitter Wood reduced to Powder. The *Siamese* have cited the example of a *Talapoin*, whom they pretend to have fasted an hundred and seven days, without eating any thing. But when I founded their opinion thereon, I found that they attributed this Fast to Magick; and to prove it to me, they added, that it was easy to live on the Grass of the Fields; provided they breathed thereon, and utter'd certain words, which they understood not, or which they would not inform me, or which they said that others understood.

After the Rice-Harvest the *Talapoints* do go for three Weeks to watch in the Nights in the middle of the Fields, under small Huts of branches of Leaves ranged square; and in the day they return to visit the Temple, and to sleep in their Cells. The Hut of the Superior stands in the middle of the others, and higher. They make no Fire in the Night to scare away the wild Beasts, as all those that travel in the Woods of this Country us'd to do, and as was done round the *Tabanques* wherein we lodged: So that the People look upon it as a Miracle, that the *Talapoints* are not devoured; and I know not what precaution they use, except that of enclosing themselves in a Park of *Bambou*. But doubtless they choose places little exposed, remote from the Woods, and where the savage Beasts cannot come with Hunger, but after having found a great deal of Food, for it is the season wherein there is plenty of Forage on the ground. The People admire also the security, in which the *Talapoints* of the Woods do live: For they have neither Convent nor Temple to retire into. They think that the Tygers, Elephants, and Rhinoceros do respect them, and lick their hands and feet, when they find any one asleep: but these may make a Fire of *Bambou*.

to defend themselves from these Animals, they may lie in the closest Thickets; and moreover, though the people should find the remains of some man devoured, it would never be presumed he was a *Talapoin*; and when they could not doubt thereof, they would presume that this *Talai* had been wicked, and would not cease to believe that the Beasts respect the good. And it must needs be that the Woods are not so dangerous as they report, seeing that so many Families do seek Sanctuary there against the Government.

The *Talapoins* have a Chaplet.

Their Habit.

I know not what the *Talapoins* do pretend, either by this Watch, or by their Lent; I ignore also what the Chaplets of one Hundred and eight Grains, on which they recite certain *Balie* words, do mean.

They go with naked feet and bare-headed, like the rest of the People: round their Reins and Thighs they wear the *Pagne* of the Seculars, but of yellow Linnen, which is the colour of their Kings, and of the Kings of *China*: and they have no Muffin Shirt, nor any Vest. Their Habit consists of four pieces. The first which they call *Angsa*, is a kind of Shoulder Belt of yellow Linnen, five or six Inches broad; they wear it on their left Shoulder, and button it with a single button on the right Hip; and it descends not lower than the Hip. Over this Belt they put another great yellow cloth, which is called the *Pagne* of the *Talapoin*, and which they call *Pa Schivon*, or the Cloth of several pieces, because it ought to be patched in several places. 'Tis a kind of Scapulary, which reaches down to the ground behind and before; and which covering only the left Shoulder returns to the right Hip, and leaves the two Arms and all the right Shoulder free. Over the *Pa Schivon* is the *Pa Pat*. 'Tis another cloth four or five Inches broad which they do likewise put over the left Shoulder, but like a Hood; it descends to the Navel before, and as much behind as before. Its colour is sometimes red: the *Sacerats* and the most ancient *Talapoins* do wear it thus, but the *Angsa* and the *Pa Schivon* can never be other than yellow. To keep the *Pa Pat* and the *Pa Schivon* in a posture, they girt the middle of their body with a Scarf of yellow Cloth which they call *Kappacod*, and which is the fourth and last piece of their Habit.

They have a little Iron-Bafon for begging.

They shave all the Head, and have a Screen in their hand.

When they go a begging they carry an Iron Bafon, to receive what is given them; and they carry it in a Linnen Bag, which hangs on the left side, by two ends of a Rope hung like a Belt over the right Shoulder.

They shave all their Beard, Head, and Eyebrows; and to defend themselves from the Sun they have the *Talapat*, which is their little *Umbrella*, in form of a Screen, as I have already said in the other part. The Superior is forced to shave himself, because no person can touch his head, without showing him disrespect. By the same reason a young *Talapoin* dares not to shave an old one: but it is lawful for the old to shave the young, I mean those Children whose Education is committed to them, and who know not how to shave themselves. Nevertheless when the Superior is very old, it is necessary that he permit another to shave him; and this other does it after having desired an express Permission. In a word, the Razors of *Siam* are of Copper.

The days on which they shave themselves, are days of Devotion to the People.

The days on which they shave themselves, are those of the new and full Moon; and on these days the *Talapoins* and the People do fast, that is to say, they eat nothing from Noon. The People abstain also on these days from going a Fishing, not that Fishing is a work, for they abstain not from any other Labor, but because that, in my opinion, they esteem not Fishing wholly innocent, as we shall see in the sequel. And in fine, the People on these days do carry unto the Convents some Alms, which consist in Money, Fruits, *Pagnes*, or Cattle. If the Cattle are dead, the *Talapoins* do eat them: if they are alive, they let them live and die about the Temple; and they eat them only when they die of themselves. Near certain Temples there is also a Pond for the living Fish, which is offer'd to the Temple: and besides these Festival days, common to all the Temples, every Temple has a particular one appointed to receive the Alms, as if it was the Feast of its Dedication: for I could not learn what it is.

The People love to adorn themselves to go to the Temples: and their Charity to Animals.

The People voluntarily assist at these Festivals, and make a show with their new Cloaths. One of their greatest Charities is to give Liberty to some Animals, which they buy of those that have taken them in the Fields. What they give

give to the Idol, they offer not immediately to the Idol, but to the *Talapoints*; and they present it to the Idol, either by holding it in their hand before the Idol, or by laying it upon the Altar; and in a little time after they take it away, and convert it to their own uses. Sometimes the People offer up lighted Tapers, which the *Talapoints* do fasten to the knees of the Statue, and this is the reason why one of the knees of a great many Idols is ungilt. As for bloody Sacrifices, they never offer up any, on the contrary they are prohibited from killing any thing.

At the Full Moon of the fifth Month, the *Talapoints* do wash the Idol with perfumed waters, but respect permits them not to wash its head. They afterwards wash the *Sacerdot*. And the People go also to wash the *Sacerdats*, and the other *Talapoints*: And then in particular Families the Children do wash their Parents, without having regard to the Sex; for the Son and the Daughter do equally wash the Father and the Mother, the Grandfather and the Grandmother. This Custom is observed also in the Country of *Laor*, with this Singularity, that the King himself is washed in the River.

The *Talapoints* have no Clock; and they wash themselves only when it is light enough to be able to discern the veins of their hands, for fear lest if they should wash themselves earlier in the morning, they should in walking kill any Insect without perceiving it. This is the reason why they wash later in the shortest days, tho' their Bell fails not to wake them before day.

Being raised, they go with their Superior to the Temple for two hours. There they sing or repeat out of the *Balies*, and what they sing is written on the Leafs of a Tree somewhat longish, and fasten'd at one of the ends, as I have said in discoursing of the Tree which bears them. The People have not any Prayer-Book. The posture of the *Talapoints*, whilst they sing, is to sit cross-leg'd, and continually to tosse their *Talapat* or Fan, as if they would continually fan themselves: so that their Fan goes or comes at each Syllable which they pronounce, and they pronounce them all at equal times, and after the same tone. In entering in and going out of the Temple, they prostrate themselves three times before the Statue, and the Seculars do observe the same; but the one and the other do remain in the Temple sitting cross-leg'd, and not always prostrate.

In going from Prayer, the *Talapoints* go into the City to beg Alms for an hour; but they never go out of the Convent, and never re-enter, without going to salute their Superior, before whom they prostrated themselves to touch the ground with their Forehead; and because that the Superior sits generally cross-leg'd, they take one of his Feet with both their hands, and put it on their head. To crave Alms they stand at the Gates, without saying any thing; and they pass on after a little time, if nothing is given them. It is rare that the People sends them away without giving them, and besides this their Parents never fail them. The Convents have likewise some Gardens, and cultivated Lands, and Slaves to plough them. All their Lands are free from Taxes, and the Prince touches them not; altho' he has the real property thereof, if he divests not himself by writing, which he almost never does.

At their return from begging, the *Talapoints* do breakfast if they will, and are not always regular in presenting to the Idol what they eat, tho' they do it some times after the manner that I have related. Till Dinner-time they study, or employ themselves as to them seems meet, and at Noon they dine. After Dinner they read a Lecture to the little *Talapoints*, and sleep; and at the declining of the day they sweep the Temple, and do there sing as in the morning for two hours, after which they lie down. If they eat in the evening, it is only Fruit; and tho' their day's work seems full by what I have said, they cease not to walk in the City after Dinner for their pleasure.

Besides the Slaves which the Convents may have, they have each one or two Servants which they call *Tapacaon*, and which are really Seculars, tho' they be habited like the *Talapoints*, excepting that their Habit is white, and not yellow. They receive the money which is given to the *Talapoints*, because the *Talapoints*

The *Siamers* do wash their Idols, their *Talapoints*, and their Parents.

The hour on which the *Talapoints* do wash themselves.

They go to the Temples, in the morning.

Then to begging, on which alone they do not always live.

How they fill up the day.

The secular Servants of the *Talapoints*.

cannot touch it without sinning : they have the care of the Gardens and Lands, which the Convent may have, and in a word they act in the Convents for the *Talapains*, whatever the *Talapains* conceive cannot be done by themselves, as we shall see in the Sequel.

C H A P. XVIII

Of the Election of the Superior, and of the Reception of the Talapains and Talapoinesses.

The Election of the Superior.

How a Secular does, who builds a Temple, and begins a Convent. How a *Talapain* is admitted.

When the Superior is dead, be he *Sacerat* or not, the Convent elects another, and ordinarily it chuses the oldest *Talapain* of the House, or at least the most learned.

If a particular person builds a Temple, he agrees with some old *Talapain* at his own choice to be the Superior of the Convent, which is built round this Temple, as other *Talapains* come thither to inhabit ; for he builds no *Talapains* Lodging before-hand.

If any one would make himself a *Talapain*, he begins with agreeing with some Superior that would receive him into his Convent ; and because there is done but a *Sacerat*, as I have said, can give him the Habit, he goes to demand it of some *Sacerat*, if the Superior with whom he would remain, is not himself a *Sacerat* ; and the *Sacerat* appoints him an hour some few days after, and for the Afternoon. Whoever should oppose him would sin ; and as this Profession is gainful, and it lasts not necessarily the whole life, the Parents are always very glad to see their Children embrace it. I have not heard what Mr. *Gervaise* reports, that it is needful to have a permission in writing from *Oc-ya Pra Sedet*, to be receiv'd a *Talapain*. I see not likewise how this could be practicable in the whole extent of the Kingdom ; and they have always assur'd me, that it is free for every one to make himself a *Talapain*, and that if any one did oppose the reception of another into this Profession, he would sin. When any one therefore is to be admitted, his Parents and his Friends accompany him to this Ceremony with Instruments and Dancers, and they stop frequently by the way to see dancing. During the Ceremony, the Demandant, and the Men that are of his Retinue, do enter into the Temple where the *Sacerat* is ; but the Women, the Instruments, and the Dancers enter not therein. I know not who shaves the Head, the Eye-brows and the Beard of the Demandant, or whether he shaves it not himself. The *Sacerat* gives the Habit with his own hand, and he cloaths himself therewith, letting the secular Habit fall underneath when he has put on the other. Mean while the *Sacerat* pronounces several *Balie* words ; and when the Ceremony is ended, the new *Talapain* goes to the Convent, where he must remain, and his Parents and Friends accompany him thither : But from this time he must no more hear any Instruments nor behold any Dance. Some days after the Parents do give an Entertainment to the Convent, and they exhibit a great many Shows before the Temple, which the *Talapains* are prohibited to see.

Whether there are several degrees of *Talapains*.

Mr. *Gervaise* distinguishes the *Talapains* into *Balaung*, *Tchaou-con* and *Pecou*. As for me, I have always heard say that *Balaung*, which the *Siamese* do write *Pat-ienang*, is only a Title of Respect. The *Siamese* gave it to the Jesuits, as we do give them the Title of Reverence. In this Country I never heard speak of the word *Picou*, but only of *Tchaou-con*, which I shall explain in the Sequel, and which some have inform'd me to be the *Siamese* word which signifies *Talapain*. So that they say, He is a *Tchaou-con*, and I would be *Tchaou-con*, to signify he is a *Talapain*, and I would be a *Talapain*. Nevertheless as there may be some difference between the *Sacerats* and *Talapains*, which the persons whom I consulted, knew not, tho' otherwise expert, it may well be that there is some like-
-wife

wife between the *Talapins* themselves, some of which might be *Pat-louang*, and others *Picou*, and that the general name of all might be *Tchou-com*; I refer myself to Mr. *Gervaise*.

The *Talapineses* do call themselves *Nang Tebit*: They are clad in white, like the *Tapacans*, and are not esteemed altogether Religious. A simple Superior sufficeth to give them the Habit, as well as to the *Nemis*: And altho' they cannot have any carnal Commerce with Men, yet are they not burnt upon this account, as the *Talapins* are, which are surprized in a Fault with the Women. They deliver them up to their Parents to bastinado them, because that neither the *Talapins* nor the *Talapineses* can strike any person.

CHAP. XIX.

Concerning the Doctrine of the *Talapins*.

ALL the *Indies* are full of *Talapins*, tho' they have not everywhere this Name, and live not everywhere after the same manner. Some marry, and others strictly observe Celibacy. Some eat Meat, provided it is given them slain, others never eat any. Some do kill Animals, others kill none at all; and others do kill very rarely, and for some Sacrifice. Their Doctrine appears not more exactly the same in all places, tho' the Foundation thereof be always the opinion of the *Metempsychosis*; and their Worship is also various, tho' it always refers to the dead.

It seems that they believe all Nature animated, not only Men, Beasts and Plants, but the Heaven, the Planets, the Earth, and the other Elements, the Rivers, the Mountains, the Cities, the Houses themselves. And moreover, as all Souls appear to them of the same Nature, and indifferent to enter into all Bodies, of what kind soever they be, it seems that they have not the Idea of the Animation as we have. They believe that the Soul is in the Body, and that it rules the Body, but it appears not that they believe like us, that the Soul is physically united to the Body, to make one with it. So far are they from thinking that the natural Inclinations of Souls is to be in Bodies, that they believe it is a Penance for them, to extirpate their Sins by their Sufferings, because that indeed there is no kind of Life which has not its Troubles. The supreme Felicity of the Soul, in their opinion, is not to be obliged to animate any Body, but to remain eternally in repose. And the true Hell of the Soul is on the contrary, according to them, the perpetual necessity of animating Bodies, and of passing from one to another by continual Transmigrations. 'Tis said, that amongst the *Talapins*, there are some which boldly assert, that they remember their past Transmigrations; and these Testimonies do doubtless suffice to confirm the People in the Opinion of the *Metempsychosis*. The *Europeans* have sometimes translated by the word *Tutelar Genius*, the Souls which the *Indians* give to the Bodies, which we esteem inanimate: But these *Genii* are certainly in the Opinion of the *Indians* only real Souls, which they suppose equally to animate all the Bodies wherein they are present, but after a manner which corresponds not to the *Physical Union* of our Schools.

The Figure of the World, according to their Doctrine, is eternal; but the World which we see is not, for whatever we see therein, lives in their Opinion, and must die; and at the same time there will spring up other Beings of the same kind, another Heaven, another Earth, and other Stars; and this is the ground of what they say, that they have seen Nature decay and revive again several times.

No Opinion has been so generally received amongst Men, as that of the Immortality of the Soul; but that the Soul is immaterial, is a Truth the knowledge of which is not so much propagated. Thus is it a very great difficulty to give

Divers kinds of *Talapins* in the *Indies*.

How they believe the whole animated Nature, and what Idea they have of the Animation.

What they think of the Eternity of the World.

Of the nature of the Soul, according to them.

unto a *Siamefe* the Idea of a pure Spirit; and this is the Testimony which the Missionaries give thereof, that have been longest amongst them. All the *Pagans* of the East do believe indeed that there remains something of Man after his death, which subsists separately and independantly from its body; but they give extent and figure to what remains, and in a word they attribute unto it all the same Members, and all the same solid and liquid Substances whereof our Bodies are composed. They suppose only that the Souls are of a matter subtle enough, to be free from touch and sight; tho' they believe that if any one be wounded, the blood which flows from its wound, may appear. Such were the *Manes* and *Shades* of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and it is by this figure of the Souls like unto that of the Bodies, that *Virgil* supposes that *Aeneas* knew *Palinurus*, *Dido*, and *Anchises* in Hell.

The Absurdity of their Opinion.

Now what is altogether impertinent in this Opinion, is, that the Orientals cannot tell why they attribute the humane Figure, rather than any other, to the Soul, which they suppose able to animate all sorts of Bodies, besides the humane Body. When the *Tartar* which now reigns at *China*, would force the *Chineses* to shave their hair after the *Tartarian* fashion, several of them chose rather to suffer death, than to go, they said, into the other World, to appear before their Ancestors without hair; imagining, that they shaved the head of the Soul, by shaving that of the Body.

Of the Punishments and Recompences of the Soul after death.

The Souls therefore, tho' material, are yet imperishable in their Opinion; and at their departure out of this life, they are punished or recompenced, with Punishments or Pleasures proportioned in greatness and duration to their good or evil works, until they re-enter into the humane Body, wherein they must enjoy a Life more or less happy, according to the Good or Evil they have committed in a former Life.

How they explain the Prosperity of the Wicked, and the Misfortunes of the Good.

If a Man is unfortunate before he has done amiss, as if he is dead-born, the *Indians* believe that he has merited it in a former Life, and that then perhaps he caused some Great-belly'd Woman to miscarry. If, on the contrary, they observe a wicked Man to prosper, they believe that he enjoys the Recompence which he has merited in another Life by good Actions. If the Life of the Man is mixt with Prosperity and Adversity, 'tis because every Man, they say, has done Good and Evil when he formerly lived. In a word, no Person suffers any Misfortune, according to their Opinion, if he has always been innocent; nor is he always happy, if he has at any time been culpable; nor does he enjoy any Prosperity, which he has not merited by some good Action.

Of the several places where the Soul passes after death.

Besides the divers manners of being of this World, as of Plant, or of Animal, to which the Souls are successively linked after death, they reckon several places out of this World, where the Souls are punished or rewarded. Some are more happy, and others more miserable than the World wherein we are. They make all these places as Stages in the whole extent of Nature, and their Books do vary in the number; tho' the most common Opinion is, that there are nine happy, and as many unhappy. The nine happy places are over our heads, the nine unhappy are under our feet; and the higher a place is, the happier it is; as also the lower it is, the more unhappy it is: so that the happy extend far above the Stars, as the unhappy do sink a great way beneath the earth. The *Siamefes* do call the Inhabitants of the superior Worlds *Thenada*, those of the inferior Worlds *Pii*, and those of this World *Manous*. The *Portugueses* have translated the word *Thenada* by that of *Angels*, and the word *Pii* by that of *Devils*; and they have given the Name of *Paradise* to the superior Worlds, and that of *Hell* to the inferior.

It there re-lives again.

But the *Siamefes* do not believe that the Souls in departing out of the Body do pass into these places, as the *Greeks* and *Romans* thought that they went into Hell: they are born, according to them, at the places where they go; and there they do live a life, which from us is conceal'd, but which is subject to the infirmities of this, and unto death. Death and a new Birth are always the road from one of these places to another, and it is not till after having lived in a certain number of places, and during a certain time, which ordinarily extends to some thousands of years, that the Souls there punished or recompenced, do happen to spring up again in the World wherein we are.

Now

Now as they suppose that the Souls have a new habitation in the places where they revive, they think they stand in need of the things of this Life; and all the ancient Paganism believed the same. With the body of a dead man, the *Gauls* burnt the things which he had most esteemed, during his Life, Moveables, Animals, Slaves, and even free Persons, if he had any singularly devoted to his Service.

To live a life full of Cares like this.

They still practice worse than this, if it is possible, among the Pagans of the true *India*, where the Wife glories in burning herself alive with the body of her Husband, to meet his Soul in the other world. I well know that some presume that this Custom was formerly introduced in the *Indies*, to secure the Husbands from the Treason of their Wives, by forcing them to die with them. *Mandeflo* reports this opinion, and *Strabo* had reported it before him, and had disapproved it, thinking it improbable either that such a Law was established, or that such a reason for establishing it was true: Indeed, besides that this Custom is extended to the Moveables and Animals, things all innocent, it is free in regard of the Women, none of which dies after this manner, if she desires it not; and it has been received in too great a part of the Country, to imagine that the Crimes of the Women have given occasion thereunto. Wives to be Slaves, or as Slaves to their Husbands, are not either more dissatisfied with their Condition, nor greater Enemies to their Husbands, and they change no part of the Condition as to this regard, by a second Marriage. Thus it is observed that the *Indian* Women have always look'd upon the Liberty they have of dying with their Husbands, not as a Punishment, but as a Felicity which is offered them. The Women Slaves do sometimes follow their Mistress to the Funeral Pile, but voluntarily and without compulsion. And moreover it is not a thing without precedent in the *Indies*, that an Husband enamour'd with his Wife, will burn himself with her, in hopes of going to enjoy another Life with her.

Why the *Indians* burn themselves with the body of their Husband.

Nouarette reports it is a Custom of the *Tartars*, that when there dies one amongst them, one of his Wives hangs herself, to follow him into the other World; but that the *Tartar* which reigned at *China* in 1668. abolished this Custom: and he adds, that though it be not common to the *Chinese*, nor approved by *Confucius*, yet it is not without example. He relates one in his time, of the Vice-Roy of *Canton*, who being poisoned himself, and feeling the approach of Death, called her, whom he loved the best of his Wives, and desired her to follow him: which she did by hanging herself so soon as he was dead.

This Custom is received among the *Tartars*, and is not without example among the *Chinese*.

But certainly neither the *Chinese*, nor the *Tonquinese*, nor the *Siamese*, nor the other *Indians* beyond the *Ganges*, have ever, as it is known, received the Custom of permitting the Women to burn: and moreover they have by a wife Oeconomy established, that instead of real Furniture and Money, it should suffice to burn with the dead bodies, those very things delineated in paper cut, and sometimes painted or gilded: under pretence, in my opinion, that in matter of Types, those of the things in Paper were as good as those of the things themselves, which the Paper represents. Wherefore the People report, that this Paper which is burnt, is converted in the other Life to the things which it represents. The richest *Chinese* cease not to burn at least some real Stuffs, and they burn moreover so much Paper, that this expence alone is considerable.

The Oeconomy of the *Chinese* and of their Neighbors in *Burials*.

But all these Oriental People do not only believe that they may be helpful to the dead, as I have already explained: they think also that the dead have the power of tormenting and succouring the living: and from hence comes their Care and Magnificence in Funerals; for it is only in this that they are magnificent. Hence it comes also that they pray to the dead, and especially the *Manes* of their Ancestors to the Great-Grand-Father, or to the Great-Grand-Father; presuming that the rest are so dispersed by divers Transmigrations, that they can hear them no more. The *Romans* likewise prayed to their dead Ancestors, tho they believed them not to be Gods. Thus *Germanicus* in *Tacitus*, at the beginning of a military expedition besought the *Manes* of his Father *Drusus* to render it happy, because that *Drusus* himself had made war in that Country.

The power of the Dead over the Living, the Source of the worship of the Dead.

They fear only their dead Acquaintance. But by a prevention, which I see diffused likewise among the Christians, that are afraid of Spirits, the Orientals neither expect nor fear any thing from the dead of foreign Countries, but from the dead of their City, or of their Quarter, or of their Profession, or of their Family.

CHAP. XX.

Of the Burials of the Chineses and Siameses.

The Reason of speaking of the Burials of the Chineses.

What are the Principal Circumstances thereof.

THE Burials of the *Chineses* are described in several Relations, but I shall not forbear speaking a word thereof, to render those of the *Siameses* more intelligible; because that the Customs of a Country do always better illustrate themselves, by the comparison of the Customs of the neighbouring Countries.

The first care of the *Chineses* in Burials is to have a Coffin of precious Wood; in which they do sometimes make an expence above their Fortune: and though they bury their bodies without burning them, they forbear not, at their Interment, to burn Goods, Houses, Animals, Money, and whatever is necessary to the Conveniences of Life; but all in Paper, except some real Stuffs which are burnt at the Funerals of the rich. Father *Simedo* reports, that at the Burial of a Queen of *China* her goods were really burnt. The second care of the *Chineses* in Burials is, to chuse out a place proper for the Tomb. They chuse it according to the advice of the Soothsayers, imagining that the repose of the deceased depends on this choice; and that of the fertility and repose of the living depends on the repose of the dead. If therefore they are not the Proprietors of the place, declared by the Soothsayers, they fail not to buy it, and sometimes dearly. And in the third place, besides the Funeral Train, which is great, they give magnificent entertainments to the dead person, not only when they bury him, but annually on the same day, and several times in the year.

The worship of the Dead.

In their House they have a Chamber designed for the *Manes* of their Ancestors, where from time to time they go to render the same Devotions to their Figure, as they render'd to their Body in interring it. They do again burn Perfumes, Stuffs, and cut Papers; and they do make them new repasts. The *Tanquinefes*, according to Father *de Rhodes*, do intermix these sorts of repasts with Paper-meats, which they burn. The same Author very largely relates the Prayers which the *Tanquinefes* make to the dead, how they demand of them a long and happy Life; with what zeal they redouble their Worship and Prayers in their Misfortunes, when the Soothsayers assure them that they ought to attribute the cause thereof to the Anger of their Parents.

The *Chineses* at present are entirely impious.

Several Relations of *China* assert, that the learned men, which in this Country are the most important Citizens, do consider the Ceremonies of Funerals, only as civil Duties, to which they add no Prayers: That at present they have not any sense of Religion, and do not believe the existence of any God, nor the Immortality of the Soul; and that tho they render unto *Confucius* an exterior Worship in the Temples which are consecrated to him, yet they demand not of him the Knowledge, which the learned Men of *Tanquin* demand of him.

The Doctrine of the Ancient *Chineses* on the worship of the Dead, and Burials, is that it is very probable that they never prayed to the dead in Funerals.

But, whether the Funerals which the learned *Chineses* do make for their Parents be without Prayers, or not; it is certain that the ancient Spirit of the Doctrine of the *Chineses*, was to believe the Immortality of the Soul, to expect good and evil from the dead, and to address some Prayers unto them, if not in Burials, at least in the disgraces of Life to attract their protection. Moreover, what opinion soever they have had of the Power of the dead to succor the living, it is very probable that they thought, that the dead were in need at the moment of the Burial, that is to say in the Entrance and Establishment of another Life, and that it then belonged to the living to succor the dead, and not to demand succor of them.

But

But it is time to relate what the Funerals of the *Siamers* are. So soon as a *Siamer* is dead his body is shut up in a wooden Coffin, which is varnished and gilded on the outside: and as the Varnish of *Siam* is not so good as that of *China*; and hinders not the stench of the dead body from passing through the cracks of the Coffin, they endeavour at least to consume the Intestines of the dead with Mercury, which they pour into his Mouth, and which, they say, comes out at the Fundament. They sometimes make use also of Leaden Coffins, and sometimes also they gild them: but the Wood of their Coffins is not so precious as at *China*, because they are not so rich as the *Chineses*. Out of a respect they place the Coffin on some high thing, and generally on a Bedsted which hath feet, and so long as the body is kept at the house, whether to expect the Head of the Family, if he is absent, or to prepare the Funeral Solemnities, they burn Perfumes and Tapers by the Coffin; and every night the *Talapoins* come to sing in the *Siale* Language, in the Chamber where it is exposed: they do range themselves along the Walls. They entertain them, and give them some Money: and what they sing are some moral Subjects upon Death, with the Road to Heaven, which they pretend to show to the Soul of the deceased.

Mean while the Family chuses a place in the Field, there to carry and burn the body. This place is generally a Spot near the Temple, which the Deceased, or some of his Ancestors had built, or near some other Temple, if there is none peculiar to the Family of the deceased. This place is inclosed with a square inclosure made of *Bambou*, with some kind of Architecture, almost of the same work as the Arbours and Bowers of our Gardens, and adorned with those Papers Painted or Gilded, which they cut to represent the Houses, Moveables, and Domestic and Savage Animals. In the middle of this Inclosure the Pile composed entirely or partly of Odoriferous wood, as are the white or yellow Sanders, and Lignum Aloes, and this according to the Wealth and Dignity of the deceased. But the greatest honor of the Funeral consists in erecting the Pile, not in eagerly heaping up Wood, but in great Scaffolds, on which they do put Earth, and then Wood. At the Burial of the late Queen, who died seven or eight years ago, the Scaffold was higher than ever was yet seen in this Country, and a Machine was desired of the *Europeans*, to raise the Coffin decently to that height.

When it is resolved to carry the Corps to the Pile (which is always done in the Morning) the Parents and Friends do carry it with the sound of a great many Instruments. The Body marches first, then the Family of the deceased, Men and Women all clothed in White, their Head covered with a White Vail, and lamenting exceedingly; and in fine, the rest of the Friends and Relations. If the Train can go all the way by water, it is so done. In very magnificent Funerals they carry great Machines of *Bambou* covered with painted and gilded Paper, which represents not only Palaces, Moveables, Elephants, and other common Animals, but some hideous Monsters, some of which resemble the humane Figure, and which the Christians take for the Figures of Devils. They burn not the Coffin, but they take out the body which they leave on the Pile: and the *Talapoins* of the Convent, near which the body is burnt, do sing for a quarter of an hour, and then retire to appear no more. Then begin the shows of the *Cone* and of the *Rabans*, which are at the same time, and all the day long, but on different Theaters. The *Talapoins* think not that they can be present thereat without Sin; and these Shows are not exhibited at Funerals upon any religious Account, but only to render them more magnificent. To the Ceremony they add a festival Air, and yet the Relations of the deceased forbear not to make great Lamentations, and to shed many Tears, but they hire no Mourners, as some have assured me.

About Noon the *Tapacau*, or Servant of the *Talapoins*, sets fire to the Pile, which generally burns for two hours. The Fire never consumes the body, it only roasts it, and oftentimes very ill: but it is always reputed for the Honor of the deceased, that he has been wholly consumed in an eminent place, and that there remains only his Ashes. If it is the Body of a Prince of the Blood, or of a Lord whom the King has loved, the King himself sets fire to the Pile, with

The Burials of the *Siamers*.

How they burn the Deceased.

The Train.

The Servant of the *Talapoins* lights the Funeral Pile.

without stirring out of his Palace. He lets go a lighted Torch along a Rope, which is extended from one of the Windows of the Palace to the Pile. As to the cut Papers, which are naturally designed for the Flames, the *Talapouts* do frequently secure them, and seize them to lead them to other Funerals; and the Family of the deceased permits them to do it. In which it appears that they have forgot the reason, why the neighbouring Nations dispence not from burning such Papers effectually: and in general it may be asserted, that there are no Persons in the world, which do ignore their own Religion so much as the *Talapouts*. It is very difficult, say some, to find any one amongst them that knows any thing. It is necessary to seek their Opinions in the *Balie Books*, which they keep, and which they study very little.

Alms at Funerals.

The Family of the deceased entertains the Train, and for three days it bestows Alms: viz. On the day that the body is burnt, so the *Talapouts* which have sung over the body, the next day to their whole Convent, and the third day to their Temple.

Funerals redoubled.

This is what is practised at the Funerals of the *Siamers*: to which it is requisite only to add, that they embellish the Show, with a great many Fire-works, and that if the Funerals are for a man of great consequence, they last with the same Shows for three days.

Bodies dug up to receive greater Funeral Honors.

It sometimes also happens that a Person of great Quality causes the body of his Father to be digged up again, though a long time dead, to make him a pompous Funeral; if when he died, they made him not such a one, as was worthy of the present Elevation of the Son. This participates of the Customs of the *Chinese*, who communicate as much as they can to their dead Relations, the Honors to which they arrive. Thus when a man not born a Kings Son arrives at the Crown of *China*, he will with certain Ceremonies cause the Title of King to be given to his deceased Father.

What the fire consumes not, is buried under Pyramids: and how the *Siamers* do call these Pyramids.

After the body of a *Siamer* has been burnt, as I have said, the whole Show is ended; they shut up the remains of his Body in the Coffin, without any Order; and this depositum is laid under one of those Pyramids, wherewith they encompass their Temples. Sometimes also they bury precious Stones, and other Riches with the body, because that it is to put them in a place which Religion renders inviolable. Some there are who say, that they cast the Ashes of their Kings into the River, and I have read of the *Peguins*, that they make a Paste of the Ashes of their Kings with Milk, and that they bury it at the mouth of their River when the Sea is retired: but as the Fire never consumes all, and as it principally spares the Bones, the *Siamers* and *Peguins* do put these remains of their Kings under Pyramids. These Pyramids are called *Pra Tchiai di*. *Pra* is that *Baly* Term, which I have frequently mentioned. *Tchiai-di* signifies Good Heart, that is to say Contentment, as I have explained it in the other part: So that *Pra Tchiai-di* amounts to these words *sacred repose*, as much as those of Repose and Contentment do resemble.

From whence came the fancy of Pyramids for Tombs.

A Tomb quite flat like ours would not in their opinion be honourable enough, they must have something of Eminence: and this is the fancy of the Pyramids of *Egypt*, and the *Mausolea*. Some People yet more vain have joyned Epitaphs thereto: and because that time effaces the Inscriptions, which are exposed to view, others have secretly put their names on the principal Stones of certain stately edifices: So that when they are discovered, their work is already demolished to the Foundation. The *Siamers* still keep to the first degree of Vanity, which is single Pyramids without any Epitaph, and so slightly erected, that those which last longest, do never last an Age.

Why the *Siamers* love to build Temples.

Those that have neither Temple nor Pyramid, do sometimes keep at their house the ill burnt remains of their Parents: But there hardly is a *Siamer* rich enough to build a Temple, who does it not, and who buries not the Riches he has remaining. The Temples are inviolable Sanctuaries, as I have said, and the Kings of *Siam*, as well as particular persons, commit their Treasures to them. I know that the *Siamers* have demanded some smooth Files of the *Europeans*, to cut the great Iron Bars which linked the Stones in the Temples, under which there was Gold concealed. The *Siamers* which have not wherewith to build a Temple,

Temple, cease not at least to make some Idol, which they give to some of the Temples already built: Which in these People is a sentiment of Vanity or Religion, whereas the building of Temples may be as much the Interest of preserving their Riches to their Family, as any other thing.

The Poor inter their Parents without burning them; but if it is possible for them, they invite the *Talapains*, who stir not without a Gratuity. Those that have not wherewithal to pay the *Talapains*, do think they do honor enough to their dead Parents, to expose them in the Field on an eminent place; that is to say on a Scaffold, where the Vulturs and the Crows devour them.

The Funerals of the Poor

I have already said, that in Epidemical Distempers they bury the Bodies without burning them; and that they dig them up and burn them some years after, when they think all the danger of the Infection is past.

Funeral honors retarded,

But they never burn those that Justice cuts off, nor Infants dead-born, nor Women that die in Child-bed, nor those which drown themselves, or which perish by any other extraordinary disaster, as by a Thunderbolt. They rank these unfortunate persons amongst the guilty, because they believe that such Misfortunes never happen to innocent Persons.

Those that are deprived of Funeral Honors.

Mourning at *China* is prescribed by the Law, and that for the Father and Mother lasts three years, and deprives or bereaves the Son during this time, of all sorts of publick Employment, if it is not Military: though to me it seems that this exception as to Military Employments, is a late establishment. On the contrary, the *Siamses* have no forced Mourning: they give marks of Sorrow only as much as they are Afflicted; so that it is more common, at *Siam*, that the Father and the Mother put on Mourning for their Children, than that the Children wear it for their Father and Mother. Sometimes the Father turns *Talapain* and the Mother *Talapainesse*, or at least they have the head one of the other: but there is only the true *Talapains*, that can likewise have the Eye-brows.

Mourning.

To me it appeared not that the *Siamses* invoke their dead Parents, what enquiry soever I have made upon it; but they cease not to believe themselves frequently tormented with their Apparitions: and then they carry Viands to their Tombs, which the Beasts do eat; and they give Alms for them to the *Talapains*, because they think that Charity is a Ransom for the Sins of the dead, as well as of the living. Besides this the *Siamses* almost on all occasions, do offer up Prayers to the good *Genij*, and imprecations against the bad, of which I have already given some examples; And these *Genij* are certainly in their opinion only Souls, all as I have said, of the same Nature.

Whether the *Siamses* pray to the Dead.

The wicked *Genij* are the Souls of those, which dye, either by the hand of Justice, or by some of those extraordinary misfortunes, which make them to be judged unworthy of Funeral Honors. The good *Genij* are all the other Souls, esteemed more or less good, according as they have been more or less Virtuous in this life. And this wholly resembles the Opinion of *Plato*, who requires that one should adhere to Vertue during life, to the end that the custom thereof may continue after death. This amounts likewise to that Ancient Opinion, which was spread also amongst some of the Ancient Christians, that the Souls of the good are changed into Angels, and the Souls of the wicked into Devils. But amongst the *Indians*, this doctrine is no other, than that the Souls of the good, spring up again after Death, in one of those places, which the *Portugueses* have called *Paradise*, and the Souls of the wicked, in one of those other places, which they do call *Hell*. Some continuing to be good after Death, do good to men, others continuing to be wicked, do hurt to men, and every thing else, as much as they can. And who knows whether these several *Paradises* which they believe, are not a confused remembrance of the several Orders of the Celestial Spirits.

How it must be understood that the Souls of the Good are changed into Angels, and the Souls of the wicked into Devils.

Now through an incredible blindness, the *Indians* admit not any Intelligent Being, which judges of the goodness or badness of Humane actions, and which orders the Punishment or Recompence thereof. Upon this account they admit only a blind fatality, which, say they, is the reason that Prosperity accompanies Vertue, and Misfortune Vice; as it determines heavy things to defend

The *Indians* have no God which is the Judge of Humane Actions.

and light things to ascend. And because that nothing more repugns reason, than to suppose an exact Justice in chance, or in the Necessity of Fate, the *Indians* incline themselves to believe something Corporeal in good or bad works, which, they say, has the power of doing unto men, the Good or Evil which they deserve. But since we have often said, that the *Indians* do own the distinction of good or bad Works, it is necessary to set down the Principles of of their Morality.

C H A P. XXI.

Of the Principles of the Indian Morals.

Five Negative Precepts.

They are reduced to five Negative Precepts, very near the same in all the Cantons of the *Indies*. Those of the *Siamese* are such as follow,

1. Kill nothing.
2. Seal nothing.
3. Commit not any impurity.
4. Lye not.
5. Drink no intoxicating Liquor, which in general they call *Lam*.

The first Precept extends to Plants and Seeds.

The first Precept is not limited to the Killing either Men or Animals: but it extends to Plants, and to Seeds; because that by a very probable Opinion, they believe that the Seed is only the Plant it self in a Cover. The Man therefore observing this Precept, as they understand it, can live only on Fruit; so far as they consider the Fruit, not as a thing which has Life, but as a part of a thing which has Life, and which suffers not, though its Fruit be pluck'd. In eating the Fruit it is necessary only not to eat the Kernel nor Stone, because they are Seeds: and it is necessary not to eat Fruit out of Season, that is to say, in my opinion, before the Season; because that it is to make the Seed, which the Fruit contains, abortive, by hindering it from ripening.

And to the not destroying any thing in Nature.

Besides this, the Precept of not killing, extends to the not destroying any thing in Nature: by reason they think that every thing is animared, or if you will, that there are Souls every where, and that to destroy any thing whatever, is forceably to dispossess a Soul. They will not, for instance, break a Branch of a Tree, as they will not break the Arm of an innocent Person. They believe that it is to offend the Soul of the Tree. But when once the Soul has been expelled out of a body, they look upon this as a Destruction already wrought, and think nothing to be destroyed in nourishing themselves with this Body. The *Talapins* make not any scruple of eating what is dead, but of killing what they think alive.

In several things they do more abhor Blood than Murder.

In several things they testify a greater Abhorrence of Blood, than of Murder: It is prohibited them to make any Incision, from whence there gushes out Blood; as if the Soul was principally in the Blood, or that it was only the Blood. And this perhaps is a confused remembrance of the ancient Command of God, who permitting unto man the use of Meats, prohibited him from eating the Blood of the Animals, because that the Blood supplies in them the place of the Soul. There are some *Indians* which dare not to cut a certain Plant, because there comes out a red Juice, which they take for the Blood of this Plant. The *Siamese* do scruple to go a fishing, only on the days when the *Talapins* shave their Head. This done, it seems to them that when they fish, they commit no Crime; by reason they think not themselves guilty of the Death of the Fishes. They say they only pull them out of the Water, and shed not their Blood. The least evasion sufficeth them to elude the Precepts. Thus they think not to sin by killing in War, because they shoot not direct at the Enemy: though at the bottom they endeavour to kill, as I have already explained it, discoursing of their manner of fighting.

But

But if any one tells them, that according to the opinion of the *Metempsychosis*, Murder oftentimes appears laudable, seeing that it may deliver a Soul from a miserable Life: They answer that forceably to dispossess Souls is always to offend them; and that moreover they are not relieved, because they re enter into the like Bodies, there to fill up the rest of the time, during which they are designed for this sort of Life. But they consider not that this reason would also prove that they did no real Injury in killing: and the *Chineſes* who in this do think otherwiſe than the *Siamſes*, do kill their Children when they have too many, and they alledge that it is to make them ſpring up more happy.

The Opinion of the *Metempsychosis* ſavourable to the Murder of the unhappy, if it renders not all Murder indifferent.

Moreover all the *Indians* do think, that to kill themſelves is not only a thing permitted, becauſe they believe themſelves Maſters of their ſelves; but that it is a Sacrifice advantageous to the Soul, and which acquires it a great degree of Vertue and Felicity. Thus the *Siamſes* do ſometimes hang themſelves out of Devotion, on a Tree which in *Balie* they call *Pra ſa maha Pont*, and in *Siamſe* *Tou pa*. Theſe *Balie* words do ſeem to ſignifie the excellent, or the holy Tree of the great *Mercury*; for *Pont* ſignifies *Mercury*, in the *Balie* Name of *Wedneſday*. The *Europeans* do call this Tree, the Tree of the *Pagodes*, becauſe the *Siamſes* do plant it before the *Pagods*. It grows in the Woods like the other Trees of the Country, but no particular Perſon can have thereof in his Garden; and it is of this Wood, that they make all the Statues of *Sommona Cadom*, which they would make of Wood. But in that Zeal which ſometimes determines the *Siamſes* to hang themſelves, there is always ſome evident ſubject of a great diſtaſte of Life, or of a great Fear, as is that of the Anger of the Prince.

To kill themſelves appears to them a very laudable thing.

'Tis about fix or ſeven years ſince a *Peguin* burnt himſelf, in one of the Temples, which the *Peguins* at *Siam* have called *Sam-Pihan*. He ſeated himſelf croſs-leg'd, and beſmear'd his whole body, with a very thick Oil, or rather with a ſort of Gum, and ſet fire thereunto. 'Twas reported that he was very much diſcontented with his Family, which nevertheless lamented exceedingly about him. After the Fire had ſmother'd and roaſted him well, his body was covered with a kind of Plaiſter; and thereof they made a Statue which was gilded and put upon the Altar, behind that of the *Sommona Cadom*. They call theſe ſorts of Saints *Pra tian tee*; *tian* ſignifies true, *tee* ſignifies certainly. Behold then how the *Siamſes* underſtand the firſt Precept of their Moral Law.

The Story of a *Peguin* which burnt himſelf.

I have nothing particular to ſay upon the ſecond: but as to the third which prohibits all manner of Uncleanneſs, it extends not only to Adultery, but to all carnal Commerce of a Man with a Woman, and to Marriage itſelf. Not only Celibacy is amongſt them a ſtate of Perfection, but Marriage is a ſtate of Sin: either through that Spirit of Modesty, which amongſt all Nations is annexed to the uſe of Marriage, and which ſeems therein to ſuppoſe an evil whereat they bluſh: or through a general Averſion to all natural indecencies, ſome of which were legal Impurities among the *Jews*. They waſh themſelves amongſt certain People after having ſeen their Wives, as after ſome other ſort of Pollution. *Mahomet* thought Women unworthy of Paradiſe, and without declaring what they ſhall become, he promiſes ſome fairer and more beautiful to his Elect.

The Prohibition of Impurity extends to the Prohibition of Marriage.

The *Chineſe* Philoſophers do ſay, that a Wife is a thing evil in itſelf, and that one muſt neither keep his own, nor take another, when he has Children, that may render unto their Parents from whom they are born, and to their Anceſtors, the Duties which the Chriſtian Religion thinks neceſſary to the repoſe of the dead. Without this pretended neceſſity they would believe Marriage unlawful, and ſo ſoon as they have Children, they think it a Vertue to make a Divorce. They cite the example of *Confucius*, who quitted his Wife when he had a Son: they alledge the example of this Son, who likewiſe quitted his; and the example and opinion of ſeveral other *Chineſe* Philoſophers, who have made a Divorce with their Wives, and who have eſteemed the Divorce amongſt the virtuous Actions. They condemn as a Corruption of the ancient manners of *China*, the Opinion of the modern *Chineſe* People, who as well as the *Siamſes*, guided by the ſentiments of Nature, look upon Divorce, if not as an Evil, at leaſt as a Miſfortune. I know nothing concerning the fourth Precept, which deſerves to be explained.

The *Chineſe* Philoſophers eſteem Divorce a Virtuous Action.

The

Every Liquor which intoxicates, is prohibited.

The fifth not only prohibits intoxicating, but the drinking of any Liquor, which may intoxicate, though one makes not himself drunk therewith. They esteem a thing evil in itself, which may hurt by the quantity.

'Tis thus that they understand their Precepts, neither do they believe that real Virtue is made for every one, but only for the *Talapains*. They think that what is Sin in itself, is Sin for all; and the *Talapains* make neither Vow, nor any thing whatever, which is a Sin in them, which is not a Sin to all the World; but according to them, the Trade of Seculars is to sin, and that of the *Talapains* not to sin, and to exercise Repentance for those that sin. They comprehend like us, that those who are designed to expiate the Sins of others by Repentance, ought to be more pure than others; and that the Punishment due and necessarily annex to Sin, may yet pass from the guilty to the innocent, if the innocent will willingly submit himself to deliver the guilty. Moreover they conceive the Nature of Sin very grossly, and very materially; for the *Talapains* content themselves with abstaining from Actions which they think wicked, but they scruple not to make the Seculars commit them, to get Advantage thereby. Thus when they would eat Rice, Rice being a Seed they cannot boil it without Sin, because it is to kill it: But they make their *Tapacans*, which are their Domestic Seculars, or rather they cause the *Talapain-Children*, which they educate, to commit this pretended Sin; and when the Rice is boiled, then they eat it. They are also prohibited to piss on the Fire, or in the Water, or on the Earth, because that this would be to extinguish the Fire, or to corrupt those two other Elements: they piss in some Vessel, and a Secular Servant pours it where he pleases, and it matters not whether he sins. The Seculars do therefore observe, or elude the Precepts only through the fear of the publick Chastisements, or through the natural strangeness which they might have to what they shall think Sin; but they ransom their Sins by their good Works, which principally consist in bestowing Alms on the Temples and *Talapains*, according to the ancient Tradition known perhaps throughout the Earth, and so frequently repeated in the Holy Scripture, that Alms deeds ransom Sins. It is easie also to observe in them a very natural and very just sentiment, which is that they much more condemn the Sins which may be easily avoided, than those which are inevitable, though they think that all are Sins. But to the end that the Morality of the *Talapains* may be better understood, I will insert at the end of this Work, most of their Maxims verbatim, as they were given me. I will add only some Remarks to make them better understood.

The Spirit of the Maxims of the *Talapains*.

There will be seen the respect which they have for the Elements, and for all Nature. They are prohibited to speak injuriously of any thing natural; to dig any hole in the Earth, and not to fill it up again after they have done it; to boil the Earth, as to boil Rice; to kindle the Fire, because it is to destroy that with which it is kindled; and to extinguish it when it is once kindled. There we shall see that they take care of Purity and Decency, as much as of real Virtue: that they have some Ideas of almost all the Virtues, and that they have hardly any that is exact; because they carry some to superstitious scruples, and that they live short of others.

Virtue according to them is impossible.

Moreover these Maxims are only for the *Talapains*; not that they think that any person can violate them without Sin: but it is that they see it is impossible for any one not to infringe them: as for example, it is very necessary that some person make the Fire. They are surprized at the Beauty of our Morality; when it is told them that it equally invites all men to Virtue, because they comprehend not that this can be a thing practicable: but when they are made to understand it, and are informed that Virtue consists not in those impossible things, wherein they place it, they content what is told them, and do believe themselves more pure and virtuous than the Christians: or rather they return again to believe that they alone are *Creeing*, that is to say pure, and that the Christians are *Gabats*, or designed to sin, like the rest of Mankind: A prevention which must quite confound us, and which proves the extrem necessity which humane reason has of a superior Light, not to err in the knowledge of good and evil, the Ideas of which do nevertheless appear unto us so easie, and so natural.

If

If therefore the *Talapoin*s do think themselves only virtuous, it is no wonder if they likewise allow themselves all the Pride imaginable in regard of the Seculars. This Pride appears in all things; as in that they affect to fear themselves higher than the Seculars, never to salute any Secular, and never to bewail the death of any person, not even that of their Parents. They have a Practice which resembles Confession, for from time to time they seem secretly to render an account of their Departments to their Superior; but are so far from confessing themselves Sinners, that they only run over the Precepts, to say they have not violated them. I have not stolen, say they, I have not lied, and so of the rest. And in a word they are not humble, and they have rather the Idea's of Humiliations and Mortifications than of Humility.

They seem to understand Entertaining and Retirement. A *Talapoin* *sins*, if Some Appear in walking along the Streets, he has not his Senses composed. A *Talapoin* *sins*, if he meddles with State Affairs. They concern not themselves therein, without a great deal of Distraction, and without attracting the Envy and Hatred of several; which suits not to a *Talapoin*, who ought only to mind his Convent, and to edify every one by his Modesty. But moreover I believe that a wise Policy has greatly contributed to interdict State Affairs to persons, who have so great a Power upon the Minds of the People. They understand Religious Obedience. Obedience is the Virtue of every one in this Country, and it is no wonder that it is found in their Cloisters. They likewise understand Chastity. A *Talapoin* *sins*, if he coughs to attract on him the Eyes of the Women, if he beholds a Woman with Complacency, or if he desires one; if he uses Perfumes about his Person, if he puts Flowers to his Ears: and in a word, if he adorns himself with too much Care. And some would likewise say, they understand Poverty, because it is prohibited them to have more than one Vestment, and to have it precious: To keep any thing to eat from the Evening, till the next day; to touch either Gold or Silver, or to desire it. But at the bottom, as they may abandon their Profession, they act so well, that if they live poorly whilst they are *Talapoin*s, they fail not to heap wherewith to live at their Ease, when they cease to be so. And these are the Idea's which the *Siamese* have of Virtue.

C H A P. XXII.

Of the Supream Felicity, and Extream Infelicity amongst the *Siamese*s.

IT remains for me to explain wherein they place perfect Felicity, that is to Perfect Felicity, the supream Recompence of good Works, and the utmost Degree of city. Unhappiness, that is to say the greatest Punishment of the Guilty. They believe therefore that if by several Transmigrations, and by a great number of good Works in all the Lives, a Soul acquires so much Merit, that there is not in any World any mortal Condition, that is worthy of it; they believe, I say, that this Soul is then exempt from every Transmigration, and every Animation, that it has nothing more to do; that it neither revives, nor dies any more; but that it enjoys an eternal Unactivity, and a real Impassibility. *Nireupan*, say they, that is to say this Soul has disappeared: it will return no more in any World: and 'tis this word which the *Portugueses* have translated it is annihilated; and likewise thus, *It is become a God*, though in the Opinion of the *Siamese*s, this is not a real Annihilation, nor an Acquisition of any divine Nature.

Such is therefore the true Paradise of the *Indians*: for tho' they suppose a great Felicity in the highest of the nine Paradises, of which we have already discoursed; yet they say that this Felicity is not eternal, nor exempt from all Inquietude; seeing that it is a kind of life, where one is born, and where one

The Vanity of the *Talapoin*s.

if Some Appear in walking along the Streets, he has not his Senses composed. A *Talapoin* *sins*, if he meddles with State Affairs. They concern not themselves therein, without a great deal of Distraction, and without attracting the Envy and Hatred of several; which suits not to a *Talapoin*, who ought only to mind his Convent, and to edify every one by his Modesty. But moreover I believe that a wise Policy has greatly contributed to interdict State Affairs to persons, who have so great a Power upon the Minds of the People. They understand Religious Obedience. Obedience is the Virtue of every one in this Country, and it is no wonder that it is found in their Cloisters. They likewise understand Chastity. A *Talapoin* *sins*, if he coughs to attract on him the Eyes of the Women, if he beholds a Woman with Complacency, or if he desires one; if he uses Perfumes about his Person, if he puts Flowers to his Ears: and in a word, if he adorns himself with too much Care. And some would likewise say, they understand Poverty, because it is prohibited them to have more than one Vestment, and to have it precious: To keep any thing to eat from the Evening, till the next day; to touch either Gold or Silver, or to desire it. But at the bottom, as they may abandon their Profession, they act so well, that if they live poorly whilst they are *Talapoin*s, they fail not to heap wherewith to live at their Ease, when they cease to be so. And these are the Idea's which the *Siamese* have of Virtue.

What the *Portugueses* have called Paradise and Hell, are neither the Perfect Felicity, nor the extream Infelicity, according to the *Siamese*s.

dies. By the like reason, their true Hell is not any of those nine places which we have called Hell, and in some of which they suppose Torments and eternal Flames: for tho' there may eternally be some Souls in these Hells, these will not always be the same: No Soul will be eternally punished; they will revive again to live there a certain time, and to depart thence by death.

The utmost degree of Infelicity.

But the true Hell of the *Indians* is only, as I have already said, the eternal Transmigrations of these Souls, which will never arrive at the *Nireupan*, that is to say, will never *disappear* in the whole duration of the World, which they do think must be eternal. They believe, that it is for the Sins of these Souls, and for their want of ever acquiring a sufficient merit, that they shall continually pass from one Body to another. The Body, whatever it be, is always according to them, a Prison for the Soul, wherein it is punished for its Faults.

The Wonders which they relate of a Man that deserves the *Nireupan*, and how they consecrate their Temples to him.

But before that a Man enters into the supreme Felicity, before that he *disappears*, to speak like them, they believe that after the Action, by which he concludes to merit the *Nireupan*, he enjoys great Privileges from this life. They believe that it is then that such a Man preaches up Virtue to others with much more efficacy; that he acquires a prodigious Science, an invincible strength of Body, the power of doing Miracles, and the knowledge of whatever has befallen him in all the Transmigrations of his Soul, and of whatever should happen to him till his death. His death must likewise be of a singular sort, which they think more noble than the common way of dying. *He disappears*, they say, like a Spark, which is lost in the Air. And it is to the memory of these sorts of Men, that the *Siamese* do consecrate their Temples.

Tho' they believe in several, they honour only one named *Sammona-Codom*.

Now tho' they say that several have attain'd to this Felicity, (to the end, in my opinion, that several may hope to arrive thereat) yet they honour only one alone, whom they esteem to have surpass'd all the rest in Virtue. They call him *Sammona-Codom*; and they say that *Codom* was his Name, and that *Sammona* signifies in the *Balie* Tongue, a *Talapoia* of the Woods. According to them, there is no true Virtue out of the *Talapoia* Profession, and they believe the *Talapoins* of the Woods much more virtuous than those of the Cities.

No Idea of a Divinity amongst the *Siamese*.

And this is certainly the whole Doctrine of the *Siamese*, in which I find no Idea of a Divinity. The Gods of the ancient Paganism which we know, govern'd Nature, punished the wicked, and recompens'd the good; and tho' they were born like Men, they came of an immortal Race, and knew not death. The Gods of *Epicurus* took care of nothing, no more than *Sammona-Codom*; but it appears not that they were Men arriv'd thro' their Virtue at that state of an happy Inactivity, they were not born, neither did they dye. *Aristotle* has acknowledged a first Mover, that is to say a powerful Being, who had rang'd Nature, and who had given it, as I may say, the string, which preserv'd the harmony therein. But the *Siamese* have not any such Idea, being far from acknowledging a God Creator; and so I believe it may be asserted, that the *Siamese* have no Idea of any God, and that their Religion is reduced all intire to the worship of the dead. And it is necessary that the *Chinese* understand it thus, and that they think not that *Pagode* signifies God: for Father *Maguillan* informs us, that they are offended when *Confucius* is treated as a *Pagode*; because this is to treat him not as God, which would not be an injury to *Confucius*: but as a Man arriv'd at the supreme Virtue of the *Indians*, which the *Chinese* do think very much inferior to the Virtue of *Confucius*.

C H A P. XXIII.

Concerning the Origine of the *Talapoins*, and of their Opinions.

It seems that it may be found in the *Chinese* Antiquity.

When I would seek by what degrees Humane Reason could precipitate itself into such strange Digressions, I think to find the Footsteps thereof in the *Chinese* Antiquity.

The

The *Chineſes* are ſo ancient, that it muſt be preſumed that at the beginning they knew the true God, and by him good and bad Works, and the Rewards or Punishments which the one and the other were to expect from that Omnipotent Judge, but that by little and little they have obſcur'd and corrupted theſe *Idea's*. God, that Being ſo pure and ſo perfect, is at moſt become the material Soul of the entire World, or of its moſt beautiful part, which is the Heaven. His Providence and his Power have been no more than a limited Providence and Power, tho' nevertheless a great deal more extenſive than the ſtrength and prudence of Men. It ſeems, ſays Father Trigaut, in the firſt Book of his *Chriſtian Expedition to China*, chap. 10. That the ancient *Chineſes* have believed the Heaven and the Earth animated, and that they have ador'd the Soul as a Supreme God, calling him the King of Heaven, or ſimply the Heaven and the Earth. Father Trigaut might raiſe the ſame doubt upon all things; for the Doctrin of the *Chineſes* has continually attributed Spirits to the four parts of the World, to the Planets, to the Mountains, to the Rivers, to the Plants, to the Cities and their Ditches, to Houſes and their Chimnies, and, in a word, to all things. And all the Spirits appear not good to them; they acknowledge ſome wicked ones, to be the immediate cauſe of the miſchiefs and diſaſters to which the humane life is ſubject. Moreover, as they thought the Earth and the Sea fixt to the Heaven by the Horizon, they have attributed but one Spirit or one Soul to the Heaven and the Earth; tho' nevertheless, and perhaps by ſome thought contrary to their firſt opinion, they have built two different Temples, the one conſecrated to the Heaven, and the other to the Earth.

If the ancient *Chineſes* acknowledge the Deity, they ſoon corrupted the *Idea* thereof.

As therefore the Soul of Man was, in their opinion, the ſource of all the vital Actions of Man; ſo they gave a Soul unto the Sun, to be the ſource of its qualities and of its motions: and on this Principle the Soul's diffuſed every where, cauſing in all Bodies which appear natural to theſe Bodies, and Omnipotence, there needs no more to explain in this opinion the whole oeconomy of Nature, and to ſupply the Omnipotence, and infinite Providence, which they admit not in any Spirit, not even in that of the Heaven.

They have taken from God the infinite Providence and Omnipotence.

In truth, as it ſeems that Man, uſing things natural for his nourishment, or for his conveniency, has ſome power over things Natural, the ancient opinion of the *Chineſes*, allowing ſuch a like power proportionably to all the Souls, ſuppoſed that that of the Heaven might act over Nature, with a prudence and ſtrength incomparably greater than Humane Prudence and Power. But at the ſame time it acknowledg'd in the Soul of every thing, an interior force, independent by its nature from the Power of Heaven, and which acted ſometimes againſt the Deſigns of Heaven. The Heaven governed Nature as a powerful King: the other Souls paid Obedience to him: He almoſt continually forced them, but ſome there were which ſometimes diſpenced with obeying him.

They have made God as a King of all Nature, but not a King always obeyed.

Confucius diſcourſing of boundleſs Vertue, which is the true *Idea* that we have of the Divinity, thinks it impoſſible. How vertuous ſoever, ſaith he, a man is, there will yet be a degree of Vertue, to which he cannot attain. The Heaven and the Earth, adds he, tho' ſo great, ſo perfect, and ſo curiouſly wrought, cannot yet ſatisfy the Deſires of all; by reaſon of the Inconſtancy of the Seasons, and of the Elements: ſo that Man finds in them wherewith to reprehend, and even juſt Subjects of Indignation. Wherefore if we thoroughly comprehend the greatneſs of extreme Vertue, we ſhall neceſſarily confeſs that the whole Univerſe can neither contain nor ſuſtain the weight thereof. If, on the contrary, we think upon that ſubtil and conceal'd point of Perfection in which it conſiſts, we ſhall confeſs that the whole World can neither divide nor penetrate it: Theſe are the words of *Confucius*, as Father Compter has given them us, by which this Philoſopher ſeems to have had no other intention, than to deſcribe the real Divinity, which he believes impoſſible, ſeeing that he finds it no where, not even in the Spirit of the Heaven and the Earth, which is what he conceived moſt perfect.

Confucius believes extreme Vertue impoſſible, and conſequently he thinks the *Idea* we have of God impoſſible.

The Divine Power and Providence being thus diſtributed as by Piece-meals, to an infinite number of Souls, the ancient *Chineſes* thought themſelves obliged to addreſs to this infinite multitude of Souls and Spirits, the Vows and Worſhip which they ow'd only to one alone.

The Worſhip due to the Creator divided amongſt the Creatures by the Ancient *Chineſes*.

Of Nature
they make a
State like to
theirs.

Of Nature they make an invisible Monarchy, which they mould their upon, and of which they believe that the invisible members had a continual correspondence with the members of the *Chinese* Monarchy, which they thought to possess near the whole Earth. To the Spirit of Heaven they allot six principal Ministers, as the King of *China* has six, which are the Presidents of the six chief Tribunals, wherein they only have a determinative Voice. They believe that the King of Heaven (for they give this Title to the Spirit of Heaven) inter-meddled only with the person and manners of the King of *China*: That all men ought to honour this supreme Spirit, but that the King of *China* only was worthy to offer Sacrifices unto him; and for these Sacrifices they had no other Priest. The Ministers of *China* offer'd Sacrifices to the Ministers of Heaven: and every *Chinese* Officer thus honoured an Officer like to him near Heaven. The People sacrificed to a multitude of Spirits diffused every where, and every one was Priest in this sort of worship: there being not any Order, or Religious body, for the service of the Temples, and for the Sacrifices.

What the *Indians* have added to these Errors.

The *Indians* do now believe, like the ancient *Chinese*, some Souls, as well good as bad, diffused every where, to which they have distributed the Divine Omnipotence. And there is yet found some remains of this very Opinion amongst the *Indians*, which have embraced Mahometanism. But by a new Error the Pagans of the *Indies* have thought all these Souls of the same nature, and they have made them all to rowl from one body to another: The Spirit of the Heaven of the ancient *Chinese* had some Air of Divinity: It was, I think, immortal, and not subject to wax old, and to die, and to leave its place to a Successor: but in the *Indian* Doctrine of the *Atemphobosi*, the Souls are fixed no where, and succeeding one another every where, they are not one better than another by their nature: they are only designed to higher or lower functions in Nature, according to the merit of their work.

Why the *Indians* have consecrated no Temple to the Spirits, not even to that of Heaven. The Ancient *Chinese* have divided the Justice of God.

The Justice of Heaven was principally busied in punishing the Faults of the Kings of *China*.

Thus the *Indians* have consecrated no Temples to the Spirits, not so much as to that of Heaven: because they believe them all Souls, like all the rest, which are still in the course of Transmigration, that is to say in Sin, and in the Torments of different sorts of life, and consequently unworthy of having Altars.

But if the ancient *Chinese* have, as I may say, reduced the Providence and Omnipotence of God into piece-meals, they have not less divided his Justice. They assert that the Spirits, like concealed Ministers, were principally busied in punishing the hidden faults of men; that the Spirit of Heaven punished the faults of the King, the Ministering Spirits of Heaven the faults of the King's Ministers, and so of other Spirits in regard of other men.

On this Foundation they said to their King, that though he was the adoptive Son of Heaven, yet the Heaven would not have any regard to him by any sort of Affliction, but by the sole consideration of the good or evil, that he should do in the Government of his Kingdom. They called the *Chinese* Empire, the *Celestial Command*; because, said they, a King of *China* ought to govern his State, as Heaven governed Nature, and that it was to Heaven, that he ought to seek the Science of Governing. They acknowledged that not only the Art of Ruling was a Present from Heaven; but that Regality it self was given by Heaven, and that it was a present difficult to keep; because that they supposed that Kings could not maintain themselves on the Throne without the favour of Heaven, nor please Heaven but by Vertue.

How they believe their Kings responsible to Heaven for the manners of their Subjects.

They carried this Doctrine so far, that they pretended that the sole Vertue of Kings, might render their Subjects Vertuous; and that thereby the Kings were first responsible to Heaven for the wicked manners of their Kingdom. The Vertue of Kings, that is to say, the Art of Ruling according to the Laws of *China*, was, in their Opinion a Donative from Heaven, which they called *Celestial Reason*, or Reason given by Heaven, and like to that of Heaven: The Vertue of Subjects, according to them, the regards of the Citizens, as well from one to another, as from all towards their Prince, according to the Laws of *China*, was the work of good Kings. 'Tis a small matter, said they, to punish Crimes, it is necessary, that a King prevents them by his Vertue. They extoll one of their Kings for having reigned Twenty-two years, the People not perceiving, that

that is to say, not feeling the weight of the Royal Authority, no more than the force which moves Nature, and which they attribute to Heaven. ^{They report} then that for these Twenty two years there was not one single Process in all China, nor one single Execution of Justice; a Wonder which they call ^{to govern} *imperceptibly like the Heaven*, and which alone may cause a doubt of the Fidelity of their History. Another of their Kings meeting, as they say, a Criminal, which was lead to Punishment, took it upon himself, for that under his Reign he committed Crimes worthy of Death. And another seeing China afflicted with Sterility for seven years, condemned himself, if their History may be credited, to bear the Crimes of his People, as thinking himself only culpable; and resolved to devote himself to death, and to sacrifice himself to the Spirit of Heaven, the Revenger of the Crimes of Kings. But their History adds, that Heaven, satisfied with the Piety of that Prince, exempted him from that Sacrifice, and restored Fertility to the Lands by a sudden and plentiful Rain. As the Heaven therefore executes Justice only upon the King, and that it inflicts it only upon the King for what it sees punishable in the People, the Ministers of Heaven do execute Justice on the secret Faults which the King's Ministers commit, and all the Officers which depend upon them: and after the same manner the other Spirits do watch over the Actions of the Men, that in the Kingdom of China have a rank equal to that, which these Spirits do possess in the invincible Monarchy of Nature, whereof the Spirit of Heaven is King.

Besides this the natural Honor which most men have of the dead, whom ^{The Chinese} they knew very well in their Life-time; and the Opinion which several have of ^{their dead} *Fidels*, having seen them appear to them, whether by an effect of this natural Honor, which represents them to them, or by Dreams so lively, that they resemble the Truth; do induce the ancient *Chinese* to believe that the Souls of their Ancestors, which they judged to be of very subtle matter, pleased themselves in continuing about their Posterity; and that they might, though after their death, chastise the Faults of their Children. ^{The Chinese} The *Chinese* People still continue in these opinions of the temporal Punishments, and Rewards which come from the Soul of Heaven, and from all the other Souls; though moreover for the greatest part they have embraced the Opinion of the *Ateemphichosis*, unknown to their Ancestors.

But by little and little the Men of Letters, that is to say, those that have ^{The Impiety} some degrees of Literature, and who alone have a Hand in the Government, ^{of the present} being become altogether impious, and yet having altered nothing in the Language of their Predecessors; have made of the Soul of Heaven, and of all the other Souls, I know not what aerial substances, unprovided of Intelligence; and for the Judge of our Works, they have established a blind Fatality; which, in their opinion, makes that which might exercise an Omnipotent and Illuminated Justice. How ancient this Impiety is at China, belongs not to me to determine. Father de Rhodes in his History of *Tonquin*, accuses *Confucius* himself therewith: Father Complet, to whom we owe the Translation of several of this Philosophers Works, pretends to justify him; and he at the same time recites several Arguments of the modern *Chinese*, by which they endeavour to demonstrate, that it is a thing wholly conformable to the Principles of Nature, that by the secret, but certain sympathies, between Virtue and Felicity, and between Vice and Infelicity, Virtue must always be prosperous, and Vice always unhappy: but in truth their Arguments are so elevated, and so forced, and correspond so ill to the Language of their Ancestors, that it is very apparent that they are only the effect of a great extravagancy of Imagination, which was not in their Ancestors.

The *Siamese* do not less dread Spirits, than the *Chinese*; though they imagine ^{The Siamese} not perhaps the Conformity between the Kingdom of the dead and theirs; have no other and moreover they have not lost the Idea of the Divinity less than the *Chinese*, ^{Judge of Hu-} *mane* ^{Actions} and that they have yet preserved this ancient Maxim, which promises Rewards ^{than Fatality} to Virtue, and which threatens Sin with Punishments; they have found out no other way, than to attribute this distributive Justice to a blind Fatality. So

that according to them, 'tis the Fatality which makes the Soul to pass from one state to a better or a worse, and which retains them more or less proportionably to their good or bad works. And it is by these degrees that men are wholly fallen from the Truth, when they would guide themselves by that weak reason, in which they so mightily glory.

The Indians believe the Talapoints and their Doctrine as Ancient as Mankind.

As to the Origin of the Talapoints and their Compeers, which are spread throughout the East, under several Names, as *Bramini*, *Jogues*, and *Bonzes*; it is so obscure in Antiquity, that it is difficult, in my opinion, ever to discover it. It appears that the Indians do believe this kind of men, and their Doctrine, as ancient as the World. They name not their Founder; and they think that it is of this Profession, that all the men have been, whose Statues are honoured in their Temples, and all those others which they suppose to have been adored before those, which they now adore.

The Chinese do name Che-Kia for the Author of this Doctrine.

The Chinese report, that the Bonzes and their Doctrine came to them from the Indians, in the eighth year of the Reign of *Mim-ti*, which answers to the 65th of our Salvation: and as they love to give the Origin of all things, they say that it was a Siamese named Che-Kia, who was the Author thereof, about One Thousand years before the Nativity of Jesus Christ, though the Siameses themselves do pretend no such thing, and who boasting Antiquity in all things, like all the other Indians, they imagine that the Doctrine of the *Metempsychosis*, is as ancient as the Souls themselves. The Japonneses do call the Che-Kia of the Chinese, *Chaka*, and the Tonquineses have corrupted this same word after another manner: for according to Father de Rhodes, they call it *Thika*.

That this Che-Kia is certainly the Siamese name of the Talapoints.

Now these words Che-Kia, and Chaka, do nearly enough approach these Siamese words *Tchaou-ca*, and *Tchaou-con*, to make suspect that they are only a light corruption thereof. *Tchaou-ca* and *Tchaou-con* signifies Lord, or literally Lord of me, with this difference, that the word *ca* which signifies me, is us'd only by Slaves in speaking to their Masters, or by those who would render such a respect to him, to whom they speak: whereas the word *con* which likewise signifies me, is not so respectful, and is joyned to the word *Tchaou*, to speak in the third Person to him that discourses of his Lord. In speaking therefore to a Talapoint, they will say unto him *Tchaou-ca*, and in speaking of him to another they will call him *Tchaou-con*. But what is remarkable is, that the Talapoints have no other name in Siamese: so that they say literally, *cräpen Tchaou-con*, I would be Lord, to signify I would be Talapoint. Their *Somma-Cadom* they call *Pra-ponte Tchaou*, which verbatim signifies the Great and Excellent Lord, and it is in this sense that they speak of their King: but these words may also signify, the Great and Excellent Talapoint. After the same manner amongst the Arabians, the word *Mon-la*, which signifies a Doctor of Law, properly signifies Lord, and the word Master is equivocal in our Language: it is spoken of a Doctor, and likewise of the King. I find therefore some reason to believe, that the Chinese having received the Doctrine of the *Metempsychosis* from some Siamese Talapoint, they have taken the general Name of the Profession, for the proper Name of the Author of the Doctrine: and this is so much the more plausible, as it is certain that the Chinese do also call their Bonzes by the Name of Che-Kia, as the Siameses do call their Talapoints *Tchaou-con*. 'Tis therefore impossible to assert, from the Testimony of the Chinese, that there was an Indian named Che-Kia, Author of the Opinion of the *Metempsychosis*, a Thousand years before Jesus Christ: seeing that the Chinese, who have received this Opinion since the Death of Christ, and perhaps much later than they alledge, are forced to confess, that they have nothing related concerning this Che-Kia, but upon the Faith of the Indians; who speak not one word thereof, not thinking that there ever was any first Author of their Opinions.

The Antient way of Instructing the People, was by Poetry and By Musick.

Before the Bonzes came from the Indies to China, the Chinese had not any Priests nor Religious; and they have none as yet for their Antient Religion, which is that of the State. Amongst them, as amongst the Greeks, the most Antient way of instructing the People, was by Poetry and Musick. They had three hundred Odes, whereof *Confucius* made great Esteem, like to the Works of *Solomon*: for they contained not only the knowledge of the Plants, but all the Duties

Duties of a good *Chinese* Citizen, and doubtless all their Philosophy: and it may be that these Odes are still preserved. The Magistrates took care to have them sung Publickly, and *Confucius* complains for that in his time he saw this Practice almost extinguished, and all the Antient Musick lost. According to him, the most sure mark of the loss of a State was the loss of the Musick; and *Plato*, like him, thinks Musick essential to good Policy. These two great Philosophers had learnt that Manners cannot be preserved, without the continual instruction of the People, and that the Laws, that is to say, the only Foundation of the Publick Authority and Repose, cannot long continue, where the Manners are corrupted: for where the Manners are corrupted, they only Study to Violate or Elude the Laws. The Learned remark in the *Pentateuch*, the *Tracts* of such a like Poetry, which contain'd the History of Illustrious Men, even of those that were more Antient than the Deluge: *Moses* cites certain places thereof, wherein is remarked the Poetick Style.

I conceive therefore that Men being wearied with singing always the same things, and losing by little and little the sense of the old Songs, have ceased to sing them, and have sought some commentaries on the Verses, which they sung no more, for lack of understanding them: That then the Magistrates left the care of these Commentaries to other Men, and that they by little and little imposing on the belief of the People, have inserted in their Lectures, many things to their particular advantage, which are the Source of the Superstitious Veneration, which the *Indians* do still retain for the *Talapoins* and their Fellow-Brethren.

How the *Talapoins* and their Brethren might have succeeded the Antient Poetry and Musick.

However it be, their Habit, their Convents, and their Temples are inviolable, though the Revolutions of this Country, may have showed some examples of the contrary. *Viet* whom I have often quoted, relates that when the present King's Father seized on the Crown, he thought it impossible securely to make an attempt upon the Person of one of the Princes of the Royal Family, till he had cunningly made him first to quit the *Talapoins* Pagne which he wore. After the same manner when this Usurper was dead, his Son who now Reigns, seeing his Uncle by the Father's side seize on the Throne, turned *Talapoin* to secure his Life, as I have reported at the beginning of this Relation.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of the Fabulous Stories which the Talapoins and their Brethren have framed on their Doctrine.

THE *Talapoins* are therefore obliged to supply the ancient Musick, and to explain their *Balie* Books unto the People with an audible Voice. These Books are filled with extravagant stories, grafted on the Doctrine which I have explained: and these Fables are almost the same throughout *India*, as the ground of the Doctrine is every where the same, or very near. They every where believe the *Metempsychosis*, and that it is only a way to punish the Souls for their faults, and to carry them gradually unto Perfection. They believe Spirits every where diffused, good and bad, capable of aiding and of hurting, but which are no other than the Souls of the dead; and they admit the Worship of these Spirits, though they raise no Altars to them; but only to the *Manes* of the men, whom they conceive to be arrived at the highest degree of Vertue, as far as they think Vertue possible. They all have some Quadrupe, which they prefer before all others; some favourite Bird, and some Tree, which they principally adore. They all believe the same thing of the pretended Dragon which causes the Eclipses, and of the pretended Mountain, round which the whole Heaven turns, to make the Days and the Nights. They have almost the same five Precepts of Morality, they reckon near the same number of Hells and Paradise.

Fables common to all the *Indians*.

dice. They all expect other men, who ought to merit Altars, like those to whom they have already consecrated some; to the end that every one may have the Field free to pretend to the supreme Vertue. They all suppose that the Planets, the Mountains, the Rivers, and particularly the *Ganges*, may think, speak, marry and have Children. They all relate the ridiculous *Metempsychoses* of the men whom they adore, in Pigs, Apes and other Beasts. *Abraham Roger* in his Book of the Religion of the *Bramins* relates, that the Pagans of *Pahacatâ*, on the Coast of *Coromandel*, do believe that their *Brama* whom they adore, was born almost, as some *Balie* Books do say *Sommona-Codum* was born, viz. of a Flower, which was sprung from the Navel of an Infant, which, they say, was a leaf a Tree in the form of an Infant biting its Toe, and swimming on the Water, which alone subsisted with God. They take no notice that the *Leaf-Infant*, subsisted too; and according to *Abraham Roger*, they in this Country believe in God, but in a God which is not adored: and without doubt he has with as little ground advanced, that others have writ that the *Siameses* believe a God.

The Fables
which the *Siameses* relate of
their *Sommona-Codum*.

'Tis no fault of mine that they gave me not the life of *Sommona-Codum* translated from their Books, but not being able to obtain it, I will here relate what was told me thereof. How marvellous soever they pretend his Birth has been, they cease not to give him a Father and a Mother. His Mother, whose Name is found in some of their *Balie* Books, was called, as they say, *Maha Maria*, which seems to signify the great *Mary*, for *Maha* signifies great. But it is found written *Mania*, as often as *Maria*: which proves almost that there are two words *Man-ya*, because that the *Siameses* do confound the *n* with the *s* only at the end of the words, or at the end of the Syllables, which are followed with a Consonant. However it be, this ceases not to give attention to the Missionaries, and has perhaps given occasion to the *Siameses* to believe, that *Jesus* being the Son of *Mary*, was Brother to *Sommona-Codum*, and that having been crucified, he was that wicked Brother whom they give to *Sommona-Codum*, under the Name of *Thevetar*, and whom they report to be punished in Hell, with a Punishment which participates something of the Cross. The Father of *Sommona-Codum* was, according to this same *Balie* Book, a King of *Teve-Lanca*, that is to say, a King of the famous *Ceylon*. But the *Balie* Books being without Date, and without the Author's Name, have no more Authority than all the Traditions, whose Origin is unknown. This now is what they relate of *Sommona-Codum*.

'Tis said, that he bestowed all his Estate in Alms, and that his Charity not being yet satisfied, he pluck'd out his Eyes; and slew his Wife and Children, to give them to the *Talapins* of his Age to eat. A strange contrariety of Ideas in this People, who prohibit nothing so much as to kill, and who relate the most execrable Parricides, as the most meritorious works of *Sommona-Codum*. Perhaps they think that under the Title of Property a Man has as much Power over the Lives of his Wife and Children, as to them it seems he has over his own: For it matters not if otherwise the Royal Authority prohibits particular *Siameses* from making use of this pretended Right of Life and Death over their Wives, Children and Slaves; whereas it alone exerts it equally over all its Subjects, it may upon this Maxim of the despotic Government, that the Life of the Subjects properly belong to the King.

The *Siameses* expect another *Sommona-Codum*, I mean another miraculous man like him, whom they already name *Prâ Naratte*, and whom they suppose to have been foretold by *Sommona-Codum*. And they before-hand report of him, that he shall kill two Children which he shall have, that he will give them to the *Talapins* to eat, and that it will be by this pious Charity that he will consummate his Vertue. This expectation of a new God, to make use of this Term, renders them careful and credulous, as often as any one is proposed to them, as an extraordinary Person; especially if he that is proposed to them, is entirely stupid, because that the entire Stupidity resembles what they represent by the Inactivity and Impassibility of the *Nireupan*. As for example, there appeared some years since at *Siam*, a young Boy born dumb, and so stupid, that he seemed to have nothing humane but the Shape: yet the Report spread it self through

through the whole Kingdom, that he was of the first men, which inhabited this Country, and that he would one day become a God, that is to say arrive at the *Nirenpan*. The People flock'd to him from all parts, to adore him and make him Presents, till that the King fearing the consequences of this Folly, caus'd it to cease by the Chastisement of some of those, that suffer'd themselves to be seduced. I have read some such thing in *Tost's India Orientale*, Tom. I. pag. 203. He reports that the *Bonzes* of *Cochinchina*, having taken away from them a stupid Infant, show'd him to the People as a God, and that after having enrich'd themselves with the Presents which the People made him, they published that this pretended God would burn himself; and he adds that they indeed burnt him publicly, after having stupified his Senses by some Drink, and calling the insensible state, wherein they had put him, Extasie. This last History is given as a crafty Trick of the *Bonzes*, but it demonstrates, as well as the first, the Belief which these People have, that there may daily spring up some new God, and the Inclination which they have to take extream Stupidity, for a beginning of the *Nirenpan*.

Sommona-Codom being disingag'd, by the Alms-deeds which I have mentioned, from all the Bands of Life, devoted himself to Fasting, to Prayer, and to the other Exercises of the perfect Life: But as these Practises are possible only to the *Talapains*, he embrac'd the Profession of a *Talapain*; and when he had heap'd up his good works, he immediately acquir'd all the Priviledges thereof.

He found himself endowed with so great a Strength, that in a Duel he vanquish'd another man of a consummated Vertue, whom they call *Pra Souane*, and who doubting of the Perfection whereunto *Sommona-Codom* was arriv'd, challeng'd him to try his Strength, and was vanquish'd. This *Pra Souane* is not the sole God, or rather the sole perfect Man, which they pretend to have been contemporary with *Sommona-Codom*. They name several others, as *Pra Ariaseria*, of whom they report that he was Forty Fadoms high, that his Eyes were three and a half broad, and two and a half round, that is to say, less in Circumference than Diameter, if there is no fault in the Writing from whence I have taken this Remark. The *Siamese* have a time of Wonders, as had the *Agyptians* and the *Greeks*, and as the *Chinese* have. For Instance, their principal Book, which they believe to be the work of *Sommona-Codom*, relates, that a certain Elephant had Three and thirty Heads, that each of its Heads had seven Teeth, every Tooth seven Pools, every Pool seven Flowers, every Flower seven Leafs, every Leaf seven Towers, and every Tower seven other things, which had each seven others, and these likewise others, and always by seven; for the numbers have always been a great Subject of Superstition. Thus in the *Alcoran*, if my Memory deceives me not, there is an Angel with a very great number of Heads, each of which hath as many Mouths, and every Mouth as many Tongues, which do praise God as many times every day.

Besides corporal strength, *Sommona-Codom* had the power of doing all sorts of Miracles. For example, he could make himself as big and as great as he pleas'd: and on the contrary, he could render himself so little, that he could steal out of sight, and stand on the head of another man, without being felt either by his weight, or perceived by the Eyes of another. Then he could annihilate himself, and place some other man in his stead: that is to say, that then he could enjoy the repose of the *Nirenpan*. He suddenly and perfectly understood all the things of the World: He equally penetrated things past and to come, and having given to his body an entire Agility, he easily transported himself from one place to another, to preach Vertue to all Nations.

He had two principal Disciples, the one on the right Hand, and the other on the left: they were both plac'd behind him, and by each other's side on the Altars, but their Statues are less than his. He that is plac'd on his right Hand is call'd *Pra Agla*, and he that is on his left Hand is call'd *Pra Scaribout*. Behind these three Statues, and on the same Altar, they only represent the Officers within the Palace of *Sommona-Codom*. I know not whether they have Names. Along the Galleries or Cloysters, which are sometimes round the Temples, are the Statues of the other Officers without the Palace of *Sommona-Codom*. Of

Pra Mogla they report, that at the request of the damned he overturned the Earth, and took the whole Fire of Hell into the hollow of his Hand: but that designing to extinguish it, he could not effect it, because that this Fire dried up the Rivers, instead of extinguishing, and that it consumed all that whereon *Pra Mogla* placed it: *Pra Mogla* therefore went to beseech *Pra Ponti Tcham*, or *Sommona-Codom*, to extinguish Hell Fire: but though *Pra Ponti Tcham* could do it, he thought it not convenient, because, he said, that men would grow too wicked, if he should destroy the Fear of this Punishment.

But after that *Pra Ponti Tcham* was arrived at this high Vertue, he ceased not to kill a *Mar*, or a *Man* (for they write *Mar* and *Man*, though they pronounce always *Man*) and as a Punishment for this great fault, his Life exceeded not Eighty years, after which he died, by disappearing on a sudden, like a Spark which is lost in the Air.

The *Man* were a People Enemies to *Sommona-Codom*, whom they called *Paga Man*; and because they suppose that this People was an Enemy to so holy a Man, they do represent them as a monstrous People, with a very large Village, with Teeth horrible for their Size, and with Serpents on their Head instead of Hair.

One day then as *Pra Ponti Tcham* eat Pig's flesh, he had a Chollick fit which killed him: An admirable end for a man so abstemious: but it was necessary that he died by a Pig, because they suppose that the Soul of the *Man* whom he slew, was not then in the Body of a *Man*, but in the Body of a Pig: as if a Soul could be esteemed, even according to their Opinion, the Soul of a *Man* when it is in the Body of a Pig. But all these inventors of Stories are not so attentive to the Principles of their Doctrine.

Sommona-Codom before his Death, ordered that some Statues and Temples should be Consecrated to him, and since his Death he is in that State of repose, which they express by they word *Nireupan*. This is not a place but a kind of Being: for to speak truly, they say *Sommona-Codom* is no where, and he enjoys not any Felicity: he is without power, and out of a condition to do either Good or Evil unto Men: expressions which the *Portugueses* have rendered, by the word Annihilation. Nevertheless on the other hand the *Siameses* do esteem *Sommona-Codom* happy, they offer up Prayers unto him, and demand of him whatever they want: whether that their Doctrine agrees not with it self; or that they extend their worship beyond their Doctrine: but in what Sense soever they attribute Power to *Sommona-Codom*, they agree that he has it only over the *Siameses*, and that he concerns not himself with other People, who adore other Men besides him.

That it is probable that *Sommona-Codom* never has been.

As therefore they report nothing but Fables of their *Sommona-Codom*, that they respect him not as the Author of their Laws and their Doctrine, but as most as him who has re-established them amongst Men, and that in fine they have no reasonable Memory of him, it may be doubted, in my Opinion, that there ever was such a man. He seems to have been invented to be the Idea of a Man, whom Vertue, as they apprehend it, has rendered happy; in the times of their Fables, that is to say beyond what their Histories contain certain. And because that they have thought necessary to give at the same time an opposite Idea of a Man, whom his wickedness has subjected to great Torments, they have certainly invented that *Thevetat*, whom they suppose to have been Brother to *Sommona-Codom*, and his Enemy. They make them both to be *Talapians*, and when they alledge that *Sommona-Codom* has been King, they report it, as they declare he has been an Ape and a Pig. They suppose that in the several Transmigrations of his Soul he has been all things, and always excellent in every kind, that is to say he has been the most commendable of all Pigs, as the most commendable of all Kings. I know not from whence Mr. *Gervaise* judges that the *Chinezes* pretend that *Sommona-Codom* was of their Country: I have seen nothing thereof in the Relations of *China*, but only what I have spoken concerning *Chekia* or *Chaka*.

The Life of *Thevetat* was given me translated from the *Baly*, but not to interrupt my discourse, I will put it at the end of this Relation. 'Tis also a Texture

ture of Fables, and a curious specimen of the thoughts of these men, touching the Virtues and Vices, the Punishments and Rewards, the Nature and the Transmigrations of Souls.

I must not omit what I borrow from Mr. Harbelot. I have thought it necessary to consult him about what I know of the *Signes*; to the end that he might observe what the words which I know thereof, have in common with the *Arabian, Turkish and Persian*: and he informed that *Saman*, which must be pronounced *Sonman*, signifies Heaven in Persian, and that *Codum*, or *Cadum*, signifies Ancient in the same Tongue; so that *Sommona-Codum* seems to signify the eternal, or uncreated Heaven, because that in Persian and in Hebrew, the word which signifies Ancient implies likewise uncreated or eternal. And as touching the Baly Tongue, he informed me, that the ancient Persian is called *Pahalevi*, or *Pahali*, and that between *Pahali* and *Bahali* the Persians make no Difference. Add that the word *Pont*, which in Persian signifies an Idol, or false God, and which doubtless signified *Mercury*, when the Persians were Idolaters, signifies *Mercury* amongst the *Siamese*, as I have already remark'd. *Mercury*, who was the God of the Sciences, seems to have been adored through the whole Earth; by reason doubtless that Knowledge is one of the most essential Attributes of the true God. Remarks which may hereafter excite the curiosity of the learned men, that shall be designed to travel into the East.

A conjecture upon the Etymology of *Sommona-Codum*, and what Language the Baly may be.

But I know not whether to this hour it is not lawful to believe that this is a proof of what I have said, that the Ancestors of the *Siamese* must have adored the Heaven, like the ancient *Chinese*, and as perhaps the ancient *Persians* did, and that having afterwards embraced the Doctrine of the *Metempsychosis*, and forgot the true meaning of the name of *Sommona-Codum*, they have made a vain of the Spirit of Heaven, and have attributed unto him all the fables that I have related. 'Tis a great Art to change the belief of the People, to leave unto them their ancient words, by cloathing them with new Ideas. Thus, it may be, that the Ancestors of the *Siamese* have thought that the Spirit of Heaven ruled the whole Nature, though the modern *Siamese* do not believe it of *Sommona-Codum*: they believe on the contrary, as I have said, that such a care is opposite to the supream felicity. They believe also that *Sommona-Codum* has sinned, and that he has been punished, at the time that he was worthy of the *Nirrepan*, because they believe the extremum virtue impossible. They believe that the worship of *Sommona-Codum* is only for them, and that amongst the other Nations there are other men, who have render'd themselves worthy of *Altars*, and which those other Nations must adore.

It seems to prove that the worship of the *Chinese* is more ancient than the Opinion of the *Metempsychosis*.

All the *Indians* in general are therefore perswaded, that different people must have different Worships, but by approving that other People have each their worship, they comprehend not that some would exterminate theirs. They think not like us that Faith is a Virtue: they believe because they know not how to doubt; but they perswade not themselves that there is a Faith and Worship which ought to be the Faith and the Worship of all Nations. Their Priests preach not that a Soul shall be punished in the other world, for not having believed the Traditions of his Country in this, because they understand not that any of them denies the Fables of their Books. They are ready to believe whatever is told them of a foreign Religion, how incomprehensible soever it be: but they cannot believe that their own is false: and much less can they resolve to change their Laws, their Manners, and their Worship. One had better to show them the contrarieties and gross Ignorance in their Books: they do sometimes agree herein, but for all this they reject not their Books; as for some falsity we reject not every Historian, nor every Physical Book. They believe not that their Doctrine has been dictated by an eternal and infallible Truth, of which they have not only the Idea; they believe their Doctrine born with the man, and written by some men, which to them appear to have had an extraordinary knowledge, and to have led a very innocent life: but they believe not that these men have ever sinned: nor that they could be ever deceived. As they acknowledge no Author of the Universe, so they acknowledge no first Legislator. They erect Temples to the Memory of cer-

What is the Spirit of the Faith of the *Indians*, or the Submission which they have to their Traditions.

tain men, of whom they believe a thousand Fables, which the superstition of their Ancestors have invented in the course of several Ages: and this is what the *Portugueses* have called the Gods of the *Indies*. The *Portugueses* have thought that what was honoured with a Publick Worship, could be only a God: and when the *Indians* accepted this word God for those men, to the Memory of whom they consecrate their Temples, tis that they understand not the force thereof.

That the worship of the *Siamese* proves not that they believe a Divinity.

There is nothing that may be taken in more various Senses, nor which may receive more different Interpretations than exterior Worship. Statues have not always been the Marks of a Divine Honor. The *Greeks* and the *Romans* have erected them, like us, to Persons yet living, without any design to make them Gods.

The *Chineses* do proceed further, and they not only consecrate Statues to some Magistrates yet living, but they erect unto them some sorts of Temples, and sacred Edifices: They establish to them a Worship accompanied with Protestations, Perfumes and Lights; and they preserve certain things of their Apparel as Relicks: though it cannot be thought that they respect these Magistrates, yet living as Gods, but as men very much inferior to the King of *China* their Master, of whom they make no Divinity. There are several Christian Princes which are served upon the Knee, and the Deputies of the third State speak to the King only in this Posture. We give Incense to particular Persons in our Churches; and the Christians do honor their Princes with many and great Marks of exterior Worship. Thus the exterior Worship of the *Indians* is not a proof that they acknowledge, at least at present, any Divinity; and hitherto we ought rather to call them Atheists than Idolaters. But when they offer Sacrifices to others than to God, and they joyn Vows to render themselves propitious, we cannot excuse them of Idolatry: for in having entirely forgotten the Divinity, they only are greater Idolaters, when they terminate their Worship to what is not God, and that they make it the sole Object of their Religion.

C H A P. XXV.

Diverse Observations to be made in preaching the Gospel to the Orientals.

That our Belief scandalizes the Orientals in several things; that one must not preach to them without caution, if one has not the gift of Miracles.

FROM what I have said concerning the Opinions of the Orientals, it is easie to comprehend how difficult an enterprize it is to bring them over to the Christian Religion; and of what consequence it is, that the Missionaries, which preach the Gospel in the East, do perfectly understand the Manners and Belief of these People. For as the Apostles and first Christians, when God supported their Preaching by so many wonders, did not on a sudden discover to the Heathens all the Mysteries which we adore, but a long time conceal'd from them, and the Catechumens themselves, the knowledge of those which might scandalize them; it seems very rational to me, that the Missionaries, who have not the gift of Miracles, ought not presently to discover to the Orientals, all the Mysteries nor all the Practices of Christianity. 'Twould be convenient, for example, if I am not mistaken, not to preach unto them, without great caution, the worshipping of Saints: and as to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, I think it would be necessary to manage it with them, if I may so say, and not to speak to them of the Myserie of the Incarnation, till after having convinced them of the Existence of a God Creator. For what probability is there to begin with perswading the *Siamese* to remove *Sommona-Cadom*, *Pra Mogla*, and *Pra Saribon* from the Altars, to set up Jesus Christ, *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*, in their stead? 'Twould not perhaps be more proper to preach unto them Jesus Christ crucified, till they have first comprehended that one may be unfortunate and innocent; and that by the rule received, even amongst them, which is, that

the Innocent might load himself with the Crimes of the Guilty, it was necessary that a God should become Man, to the end that this Man-God should by a laborious life, and a shameful, but voluntary Death satisfy for all the Sins of men: but before all things it would be necessary to give them the true Idea of a God Creator, and justly provoked against men. The Eucharist after this will not scandalize the *Siamese*, as it formerly scandalized the Pagans of Europe: forasmuch as the *Siamese* do believe that *Sommona-Codom* could give his Wife and Children to the *Talapouts* to eat.

On the contrary, as the *Chinese* are respectful towards their Parents even to a scruple, I doubt not that if the Gospel should be presently put into their Hands, they would be scandalized at that place, where when some told J. Christ that his Mother and his Brethren asked after him, he answered in such a manner, that he seems so little to regard them, that he affected not to know them. They would not be less offended at those other mysterious words, which our divine Saviour spake to the young Man, who desired time to go and bury his Parents, Let the dead, saith he, bury the dead. Every one knows the trouble which the *Japanese* expressed to St. Francis Xavier upon the Eternity of Damnation, not being able to believe that their dead Parents should fall into so horrible a Misfortune, for want of having embraced Christianity, which they had never heard of. It seems necessary therefore to prevent and mollify this thought, by the means which that great Apostle of the *Indies* used, in first establishing the Idea of an omnipotent, all-wise, and most just God, the Author of all good, to whom only every thing is due, and by whose will we owe unto Kings, Bishops, Magistrates, and to our Parents, the Respects which we owe them. These Examples are sufficient to shew with what precautions it is necessary to prepare the minds of the Orientals, to think like us, and not to be offended with most of the Articles of the Christian Faith.

The *Chinese* do not less respect their Teachers than their Parents; and this sentiment is so well established amongst them, that they chastise the Tutor to the Prince, the presumptive Heir of the Crown, for the Faults which that Prince commits; and that there are some Princes, who being made Kings, have revenged their Tutors. The *Indians* do likewise greatly honour the Memory of those, whom they believe to have preach'd up Virtue efficaciously: they are those, whom they have judged worthy of their whole Worship; and they take Offence that we are scandalized thereat. Could we, say they, do less for those, who have preached unto us so holy a Doctrine? Father *Jerom Xavier*, a Portuguese Jesuit, having published at *Agra* a kind of Catechism, under the Title of the *Mirror of Truth*: A Persian of *Ispahan* named *Zinel Abedin* wrote an answer thereunto, under the Title of the *Mirror repuls'd*, which the Congregation de *Propaganda fide* thought necessary to have confuted: and it committed the care thereof to Father *Philip Guadagnol*, of the Order of the Regular Minimines. But he spake so unworthily of *Mahomet*, that his confutation proved ineffectual; because that the Mission of *Ispahan* dar'd never to publish it: and this Mission desiring Father *Guadagnol* somewhat to moderate his Satyr, this good Father running into the other extremum, made a Panegyrick upon *Mahomet*, which drew upon him a Reprimand from the Congregation de *propaganda*. 'Tis therefore necessary in these sorts of matters to observe a wise Moderation, and to speak respectfully, at least to the *Indians*, of *Bramah*, *Sommona-Codom*, and all the rest, whose Statues are seen on their Altars. 'Tis necessary to agree with them that these men have had great natural lights, and intentions worthy of Praise; and at the same time to insinuate to them, that being men, they are deceived in several things important to the eternal Salvation of Mankind, and principally in that they have not known the Creator.

But next to this Blindness, which it is necessary to demonstrate inexcusable, why should we not praise the Legislators of the East, as well as the Greek Legislators, for that they have applied themselves to inspire into the People, what to them has appeared most virtuous, and most proper to keep them in Peace and Innocence? Why should we blame them for the Fables, which a long succession of Ages full of Ignorance has invented upon their account, and of which

That the reading of the Holy Scripture ought to be permitted to them only with Caution.

'Tis necessary to speak to the Orientals with an esteem of their Legislators.

That these Law-givers may be praised in some things:

probably they have not been the Authors: considering that when they had spoken magnificently of their persons, they had only done what is pardonable in almost all other Legislators? They have the merit of having known before the *Greeks* some intelligent Beings superior to man, and the Immortality of the Soul.

That the Doctrine of *Metempsychosis* may be excused by Physical Reasons.

But if they have believed the *Metempsychosis*, they have been thereto induced by apparent Reasons. Ignoring all Creation, and establishing moreover that a Soul cannot proceed from a Soul, and that there could not be an infinite number of Souls; they were forced to conclude that the infinite number of the living, which had succeeded one another in the World, during all this past Eternity, which they supposed that the World had already lasted; could not be animated by this finite number of Spirits, unless they had passed an infinite number of times from one body to another. The Opinion of the *Metempsychosis* is therefore founded on several Principles which we receive; and certainly contains only one Falstiy, which is the pretended Impossibility of the Creation.

And by Political Reasons.

As to the natural consequences of this Doctrine, the Prohibition of Meats is very wholesome in the *Indies*, and the Horror of Blood would be every where useful. The great *Burcalon*, elder Brother to the first Ambassador of *Siam*, ceased not to reproach the Christians for the bloody Madness of our Wars. On the other hand, the Opinion of the *Metempsychosis* comforts men in the Misfortunes of Life, and fortifies them against the Horrors of Death, by the Hopes which it gives of reviving another time more happily: and because that men are credulous in proportion to their desires, 'tis observed that those, who esteem themselves the most unhappy People in this Life, as Eunuchs, do strongly adhere to this hope of another better Life, which the Doctrine of the *Metempsychosis* has given to good men.

The fear of the dead Parents excused by Political Reasons.

But if Error can be advantageous, what other can be so much as that Fear of Children for their dead Parents. *Confucius* makes it the only Foundation of all good Policy. And indeed it establishes the Peace of Families, and of Kingdoms: it bends men to Obedience, and renders them more submissive to their Parents and to their Magistrates; it preserves good Manners and the Laws. These People comprehend not that they can ever abandon the Opinions and Customs, which they have received from their Fathers, nor avoid, if they did, the Repentment which, in their Opinion, their Ancestors would express thereat. The *Chinese* Doctrine has no other Paradise, nor Hell, than this Republic of the dead, where they believe that the Soul is received at the departure out of this Life, and where it is well or ill entertained with the Souls of its Ancestors, according to its Virtues or its Vices.

This fear causes the stability of the Laws of *China*.

'Tis upon this consideration, that the Lawful Kings of *China* have abstained from making any Innovations on the Government. None but Usurpers dare to do this, not only by the Right which force gives them, but because that not being descended from the Kings their Predecessors, they have not thought any respect due to their Establishments.

Yet it has its inconveniences.

Nevertheless as all errors have bad sides, *Confucius* being ask'd by one of his Disciples, whether the dead had any sense of the Respects which their Children paid them, answer'd, That it was not fitting to make these over-curious sorts of Questions; that by answering negatively, he fear'd to abolish the respect of Children for their dead Parents; and by answering affirmatively, he dreaded the exciting the best Persons to kill themselves, to go and join their Ancestors.

The *Talapains* must not be thought knowing and interested Impostors.

'T would also be, I know not what Injustice to treat the *Talapains* as Impostors, and interested Persons. They deceive only because they are first deceived: they are not more cunning, nor more interested than the Seculars. When they preach to the Seculars to bestow Alms upon them, they think their Preaching their Duty; and in every Country the Ministers of the Altar do live on the Altar.

That it is necessary with the Orientals to use all the insinuations which our Religion and the example of the first Christians can permit us.

I am therefore convinced, that the true secret of insinuating into the mind of these People, supposing one has not the Gift of Miracles, is not directly to contradict them in any thing, but to show them, as at unawares, their Errors in the Sciences, and especially in the Mathematicks and Anatomy, wherein they are most

most palpable : 'Tis to change the Terms of their Worship the least Imaginable, by giving to the true God, either the Name of Sovereign Lord, or that of King of Heaven and Earth, or some other Name which signifies in the Language of the Country, what is most worthy of Veneration, as the word *Prä* in *Siamese* : But at the same time it be necessary to instruct them to annex unto these Names the intire Idea of the Deity, an Idea so much the more easie to receive, as it only heightens and embellishes the mean Idea's of the false Gods. *Gott* which now signifies God in German, was anciently, according to *Vossius*, the Name of *Mercury*, who seems to have been every where adored. Certainly the words *Theos* and *Deus* have not always signified in *Greece* and *Italy* the God, which we adore. What then have the Christians done ? They have accepted these Names in the stead of the ineffable Name of God, and they have explained them after their manner. From the Knowledge of an eternal, spiritual God and Creator, it would be easie to descend to the Faith of Jesus Christ : and these People would make no Opposition, if first they saw themselves cured of some sensible Ignorance. The Spirit of man is such, that he almost implicitly receives the Opinions of him, who has visibly convinc'd him of his first Errors. Thoroughly convince a sick person that the Remedy which he uses is not good, and he will immediately take yours.

But in my opinion it is one of the most important Articles of the conduct of the Missionaries, to accommodate themselves entirely to the simplicity of the Manners of the Orientals, in their Food, Furniture, Lodging, and whatever the Rules of the *Talapoins* prescribe, wherein they have nothing contrary to Christianity. The example of Father *de Nobilibus* the Jesuit is famous. Being in Mission to the Kingdom of *Madura* in the *Indies*, he resolv'd to live like a *Yoguee*, that is to say, like a *Bramin* of the Woods ; to go with his Feet naked, and his Head bare, and his Body almost naked in the scorching Sands of this Country, and to nourish himself with that excess of frugality, which appear'd intolerable : and it is reported that by this means he convert'd near forty thousand persons. Now as this exact imitation of the *Indian* severity is the true way to make some Conversions, so the further one should remove therefrom, the more one should attract the hatred and contempt of the *Indians*. It is necessary to learn in these Countries, to make a shift with whatever they do, and not to sustain the necessities, or rather the superfluities of these Countries, if one would not cause Jealousie and Envy to some Nations, the particular persons of which conceal their fortune, because they can preserve it only by hiding. The less the Missionaries appear settled, the more the Mission is established, and the better it promotes Religion. As the East is not a Country of settlement for private persons, it would be an injury to think to accomplish it : the Natives of the Country do not themselves enjoy any solid fortune ; and they would not fail to pick quarrels with those that should appear richer than them, to deprive them of their Riches. Moreover, the Orientals seem to have no prejudice for any Religion ; and it must be confessed, that if the beauty of Christianity has not convinc'd them, it is principally by reason of the bad opinion, which the Avarice, Treachery, Invasions, and Tyranny of the *Portugueses*, and some Christians in the *Indies*, have implanted and rivetted in them. But it is time to conclude this Relation with the Life of *Thevetat*, the Brother of *Sommona Codom*, and with all the other things that I have promised.

The End

